TEACHING IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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TEACHING IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

TRAINING COURSES FOR LEADERSHIP

E. B. CHAPPELL, D.D., *Editor*

TEACHING IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY

GOODRICH C. WHITE

DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

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FOREWORD

No successful teacher is content with mere rule-of-thumb methods. Technique is effective only when it is the expression of vital principles. Yet principles are vital only when they are the outgrowth of earnest consideration of actual problems of a practical character. Principles that function in real teaching situations are developed in those situations, not dictated by authority.

Every teacher comes to a text-book on teaching with some definite questions in mind, seeking help in answering them. For the teacher with some experience in the Sunday school class but with little or no acquaintance with pedagogical discussion these questions are apt to be of a pressingly practical character.

It is with the insistent questions of the teacher face to face with the actual problems of the class period that we must start in our teacher training programs. This conviction accounts for the titles of the first two chapters of this text. In the search for the answers to the practical questions there for-

mulated the need for guiding principles is soon encountered.

Throughout the text the emphasis is upon principles—stated always with as little of technical verbiage as possible. The principles are developed, however, in connection with the discussion of questions of method and procedure. Formal definitions, statements of aim, general principles, come last instead of first, as the need for them is suggested in the consideration of questions of practical import to the teacher. The training class leader who can help the students to genuine comprehension of the principles and to the discovery of their application to their own problems will use the text most effectively.

The actual working conditions of the average Sunday school teacher were constantly in mind in the writing; yet it was felt that the text should stimulate interest in the most recent attempts to realize more completely in practice the accepted principles of sound educational theory. Hence the chapter on the project method.

A final guiding consideration was the wish to leave the student dissatisfied at the completion of the study of this text. Many, perhaps most, of its

readers it will initiate into psychological and pedagogical discussion. It will have failed of its aim if it has not established the purpose to go further in the search for help in formulating principles and determining methods.

G. C. W.

Emory University,
March, 1926.

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CHAPTER I

GETTING AND HOLDING ATTENTION

I. How May We Get Attention?

A Visit.—Suppose we should visit a strange Sunday school some morning and quietly slip into several classes to see what is going on. We should not, of course, wish to make any final judgments as to a teacher's skill on the basis of such casual observation. But suppose we were asked to express an opinion as to the work. On what basis would we do it? Here was a class that seemed absorbed and intent. It may have been listening to a story told by the teacher; it may have been eagerly answering and asking questions; it may have been busily and somewhat boisterously engaged in some sort of activity; but whatever the nature of the class work, it was holding the undivided attention of every member of the class.

But there was another class in which we noticed one boy asleep; another reading a story paper; an-

other furtively sticking pins in the boy just in front of him; while still another gazed out of the window with an expression that revealed his boredom and his longing for the end of the class hour and his release into the open.

Judging the Class.—We feel that the teacher of this second class was failing. On the other hand, we feel that we have seen good teaching in the first class because the members of the class were responding attentively. Notice this: our judgment about the two classes comes not from watching and listening to the teacher so much as from watching and listening to the class. We feel, and rightly, that there can be no successful teaching with an inattentive class; and we feel that where the class is attentive the chances are that good work is being done.

Attention Essential.—Now we would be mistaken if we stopped here. We should go deeper and ask what it is that is holding the attention; whether the activities in which the class is absorbed are really helping to accomplish the teacher's purposes and the purposes of the Sunday school. There may be right and wrong ways of getting and holding the attention, and we shall need to inquire further about this. But we may recognize as least this much here; *atten-*

tion on the part of the pupils is essential to effective teaching. Without attention there can be no teaching because there can be no learning.

And one of the first questions that the new teacher is apt to ask has to do with just this matter. How can I make my boys and girls pay attention? The problem of getting and holding attention is one that confronts the teacher from the first moment he takes his place before the class.

Wrong Methods.—There are numerous ways in which the teacher can get and hold attention. He may bang with a ruler on the table, or slam a book down hard, or vigorously ring a bell, or clap his hands. He may elevate his voice and exhort the children, "Pay attention now! Look right at me! Listen to me!" He may even lay hands upon the restless boy or girl and threaten greater violence if the unfortunate one doesn't sit still and "behave." And these methods are apt to succeed—for the time being. The loud noise of the ruler or the bell does attract attention; punishment, or the fear of it, will lead, at any rate, to the counterfeiting of attention. But is procedure of this sort a part of good teaching? It is easy for us to say no. But we ought also to try to find out why it is not. In trying to

answer the question let us turn to the pupil again.

Why They Are Wrong.—Why does the pupil give attention to the loud noise, the emphatic command? Why is the threat of punishment usually effective? Suppose you are sitting in your room absorbed in reading. Suddenly a loud report sounds outside your window or some one shouts excitedly. What would you do? Probably just what everyone else would do—jump up and run to see what is the matter. Now the response of the child in the Sunday school class to the loud noise of bell or voice or handclap is exactly the same kind of response that yours is to the explosion or the shout. Both depend on a basic characteristic of human nature. We are so made that we naturally give attention to loud noises, especially sudden noises; to bright lights; in fact, to intense stimuli of any sort, smells and tastes and temperatures as well as lights and sounds.

But the interesting thing is this; after a while, if repeated often enough, these things lose their power, and we cease to pay attention to them. We learn to go on with the things that interest us in the midst of all sorts of sights and sounds that at first probably were great distractions. That is just what happens in the case of the class whose teacher has to

resort continually to methods of the sort we are thinking about. After a while the pupils get to the point where they no longer pay any attention to the noises. They go right on with the interesting things they are doing or thinking about and barely pay the teacher's efforts the compliment of momentary notice. They have learned that the signals and the exhortations don't mean anything; that nothing worth while is going to follow them; and they have grown so accustomed to them that they are no longer bothered by them.

Threats of punishment work because it is another law of human nature that we tend to leave off those things that bring unpleasant consequences. The trouble with such a method in getting the attention of a class is that what the pupil leaves off is apt to be, not the inattention, but the outward manifestation of it. Attention may be very successfully counterfeited so far as external appearances go; but this counterfeit attention is no more effective for learning than is counterfeit money in the purchase of useful commodities. In other words, when punishment threatens, what the boy is apt to do is to pretend to pay attention, when in reality he may be thinking dire thoughts as to what he'd like to do

or say to that teacher, or wishing he were out of this, or planning for tomorrow's fun, or what not—anything except really entering into the work of the class.

II. How Should We Get Attention?

The Real Question.—There are, then, ways of getting attention that will work, temporarily at least, and yet that are not good ways to use. This suggests that, after all, our question should be reworded: we should ask not, How *can* we get and hold attention? but, How *should* we get and hold attention? What are the right ways, the best ways, of getting and holding the attention of our pupils?

What Is Inattention?—Now we may well ask here, What do we mean by saying that pupils are inattentive? Do we mean that their minds are blank, that they are paying attention to nothing at all? Certainly not. What we do mean, then, by inattention is simply this: attention to something different from what we would choose. Briefly, inattention is attention to the wrong thing. We recognize that when we do not have the attention of our pupils something else does have it. And this enables us to realize a very important fact—that our task is

not that of *creating* attention but of *competing successfully for attention.*

Competing Against Rivals: External Distractions.—What are some of the rivals with which the teacher has to compete? It will be an interesting exercise for you at this point to write down some of the various sorts of things that may serve to distract the attention of your pupils. Many of them you will find to be external distractions. Outside sights and sounds, interruptions by officers and visitors, uncomfortable seats, ugly and inappropriate rooms—all these may very seriously hamper the work of the teacher by serving as distractions that have to be overcome. It is for this reason that emphasis is being placed upon the provision of separate classrooms, and of comfortable and appropriate furniture; and that is why, also, it is coming to be understood in most Sunday schools that no interruption by anybody is to be permitted after the teaching period has begun. It is well to think about the various external sources of distraction in your Sunday school and what may be done to protect the teacher against them. Everything possible should be done to reduce the number of rivals against which the teacher must bid for her pupils' attention.

Internal Distractions.—But the distractions are not all external. If they were, the problem would be comparatively easy of solution. More serious and more difficult to compete with are the internal distractions. We have already suggested that attention may be counterfeited. The pupil may sit in the class and to all outward appearances be absorbed in what is going on. And yet he might just as well be a thousand miles away so far as getting anything out of the class is concerned. He is there in the flesh only. And if his thoughts are a thousand miles away—or even just outside the window—his body had just as well be with his thoughts. The teacher's task is that of competing successfully with the many absorbing things that so easily crowd out from the boy's mind—or the girl's—the things he would like to have there. There is no question of the pupil's being attentive. The trouble is that he is so attentive to the things that seem to him worth paying attention to that we find it sometimes a very difficult task to get him to be attentive to the things that seem to us worth while.

The Real Answer: Interest.—And that suggests the real answer to our question as to how to get and hold attention. *We must find a way to give*

boys and girls things to do that seem worth while to us and that at the same time will seem so worth while to them that they will crowd other things out of mind. The reason that baseball and fishing and hunting and swimming and tops and marbles and butterflies and dolls and dogs and stories of adventure—yes, and sticking pins in one's neighbor or giggling over youthful inanities; the reason that romance and day-dreaming and clubs and camps are so absorbing to boys and girls, young and old, is that they appeal to something vital in boy or girl nature. They satisfy real needs. These interests and needs change as the boy or girl grows older. But they cannot be denied or disregarded. The Sunday school teacher may fight against them—and fail; or he may appeal to them, use them, direct them, and thus make them work for him instead of against him. In brief, the only way to get and hold the attention of boys and girls is by making the work of the Sunday school class genuinely interesting to them.

Surely. But does this help us much? We seem simply to have stated our problem in another way. Get and hold attention by arousing interest. But how arouse interest? Of course an interested class

is an attentive class; but how can we get our classes interested? That is the problem with which we started.

Effective Attention a Response to Good Teaching. —But the problem is somewhat changed. We are no longer content simply to secure the semblance of attention. We are no longer willing to resort to artificial methods of a sort that soon lose their effectiveness for securing any genuinely helpful attention. We want the attention to be the kind that grows out of the appeal that class work makes to something real and vital in the pupil's nature. We are ready to say, now, that the question of getting and holding the attention cannot be answered satisfactorily apart from some of the larger questions of teaching. We are beginning to see that in order to have attention that is really worth anything we must be teaching the kind of lessons and using those methods that get hold of boys and girls, and appeal so strongly that other things cannot compete successfully with them.

This, then, should stand out from our discussion of attention: the kind of attention we wish is not secured by artificial means. It grows out of the fact that the lesson itself and the methods used in

teaching it are vitally related to the pupil's interests —so vitally that he cannot help paying attention. Getting and holding attention of the right sort is a matter of *teaching well.* Paying attention is an essential but not an independent part of learning. The pupil who has a chance to do something worth while, from his point of view, in the class, has no struggle to keep his attention on that thing. The good teacher does not have to bother with the problem of attention as a separate problem. It solves itself in the solution of the larger problem of effective teaching.

III. Essentials to Good Teaching

It is the purpose of this book to suggest something of what good teaching means. Here are some essentials to good teaching that we may list in anticipation of the chapters that follow:

(1) Distractions guarded against.
(2) A lesson suited to the capacities, interests, and needs of the pupils.
(3) Careful assignment in advance.
(4) A definite purpose or aim.
(5) Careful preparation.
(6) Careful planning.
(7) Genuine interest on the part of the teacher.

(8) Enlistment of activity of the pupils.
(9) Use of special methods best suited to the particular class.
(10) Variety in method.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is the attention of pupils necessary?
2. How would you decide whether or not a pupil is paying attention?
3. Make a list of some of the wrong methods that you have actually seen used for getting attention. Why were they wrong?
4. What is inattention? How does the answer to this question help the teacher understand the problem of getting and holding attention?
5. What are some of the external distractions against which teachers in your Sunday school have to contend? Be definite in your answer.
6. What might be done in your Sunday school to protect the teachers against these external distractions? Be definite in your answer.
7. What is meant by "internal distractions"?
8. In what way may internal distractions be overcome? Be definite in your answer.
9. Consider the last lesson you taught: Were the pupils attentive? How do you know? What do you think was the reason for their attention or inattention? Was the lesson interesting to them? In what ways? Was it suited to their abilities? Did it give them something they really needed—and wanted?

CHAPTER II

GETTING PUPILS TO STUDY

I. The Problem of Getting Study

How can I get my pupils to study the lesson? This is a very definite, practical question that the new teacher asks almost as readily as the question about getting attention in class. And the two questions are at bottom one—the problem of how to enlist the pupil in the work of the Sunday school. We want something more than to have the pupil present physically on Sunday morning. We want preparation and we want attention.

We have seen how the question of getting and holding attention changes, as we think about it, from a question of possible methods to a question of right methods; and how also it relates to the whole question of good teaching. The question of getting pupils to study, also, is a question not of "How can we?" but rather of "How should we?" We want the kind of study that will mean most in the accomplishment of our purposes. And this means that

we turn our thought again to the pupil. Getting study and getting attention are not ends in themselves but means to an end. We should want to know not only whether the pupil studies but also why he studies. The reason why he studies, his motive, has much to do with the good he derives.

II. Methods Sometimes Used

What are some of the methods that teachers with more or less success do adopt to get pupils to study?

Punishment: Why It Fails.—One of the methods of the day school, much more common in the past than at present, was punishment for failure. Here was a certain task that had to be done, a certain lesson that must be learned. The pupils who failed to accomplish the task were "kept in" until they did. Rebellious pupils, inattentive pupils, were the victims of severer methods. The thing was to get the pupil to "behave" and to learn his lessons. The question of why he submitted and did what he was told was a matter of no importance.

It is fortunate that the Sunday school cannot usually adopt such methods as this. If the sole purpose of the school is to get so much knowledge crammed into the heads of boys and girls, willy-

nilly, then such methods might be justified. But if the purpose of the school is to develop love for the things of the mind and heart that the school offers, then the resort to such methods must be looked upon as a confession of failure. What is apt to happen is that the pupil comes to hate school. He does just enough to "get by" and no more. And the very first chance he has he quits.

Whatever may be true of the public school, it is certain that the Sunday school cannot accomplish its task of developing loyalties and high ideals and worthy motives through punishment and threats of punishment. Loyalty is won, not commanded. One cannot compel affection. Ideals and attitudes are not really one's own, not really a part of character, until their values are felt and their influence made effective in the life. This means that the things we try to get our pupils to do in order that they may learn must be things that genuinely take hold of their lives in some vital way. Interest is the secret of getting study as well as of holding attention. The interested pupil will study. We may compel our pupils to do certain tasks in unwilling and half-hearted fashion. We may force them to learn in rote fashion certain facts or certain words. But

things learned in that way will not make character. We can put into the lives of our pupils only that into which we can get them to put themselves.

Prizes and Rewards: Their Dangers.—We must not be misled at this point. Rejecting force as a method of getting study does not mean adopting the method of paying for the performance of duty. We can accomplish the results we want no better by bribery than we can by compulsion. And the Sunday school is sometimes guilty of bribery as a method of securing "faithful work" on the part of the pupils. The question of the use of prizes and rewards in the Sunday school is worthy of some thought.

It is worth noting, in the first place, that when a boy or girl studies the lesson and brings a contribution and does his notebook work and keeps still in class because he wants to win a prize, his motive at bottom is a selfish one. There is being cultivated in him a trait that it would seem we ought to wish to eradicate. This is particularly true when the prize is offered for the "best record," so that only one pupil can win. The competition and the jealousy aroused by methods of this kind are apt to be very unwholesome in their effects.

Some of the objections are met when the prize

is attainable by anyone who reaches a certain standard. But even here, where the prize has value in itself, the motive may be selfish. In any case, where the work is done for the sake of the prize, the pupil himself is not wholly in *the work*. Part of his effort and thought are centered on the prize. The work then cannot have the value for development that it should have. This is true even when the element of individual competition is eliminated by making the contest a contest between groups or teams or classes instead of between individuals. Here the motive is all too apt to be winning the prize instead of doing something worth doing. Sometimes these group contests develop a warmth and a spirit quite out of accord with what the Sunday school is supposed to stand for. They may even lead to dishonest methods in the effort to win.

Competition in the Sunday School.—On the other hand, it is true that rivalry is a strong motive in human conduct. The teacher's problem is to use it in such a way that it does not cultivate wrong attitudes and wrong standards of value. These general suggestions may be made:

1. If any sort of reward is offered it should be in the nature of recognition for achievement of some

kind rather than something valuable in itself. A diploma, a certificate of honor, a place on the honor roll, are better than any sort of prize, even a Testament. If the teacher wishes her pupils to have Bibles they should be given, not won as prizes.

2. Attainment of this recognition should be possible for all who reach a certain standard. This should hold for group and class competition as well as for individual competition. Where there is only one "banner class" it is possible that the banner class one month may have a poorer record than several classes some other month. There should be a banner, or its equivalent, for every class that measures up to a certain standard.

3. Attainment of the prize, winning a contest, even receiving recognition for work well done, should never be so emphasized that the real purpose of the work is lost sight of. This holds for "points" in a pupil's or a class's record. It holds as well for drives for new members, better attendance, raising funds, service activities—anything into which competition may enter.

4. Winning should never be so emphasized as to lead to any sort of dishonesty in reaching or counting results. This ought not to need saying; but the

observation and experience of many teachers will confirm the necessity for it.

5. The most worthy sort of competition is competition with oneself in the effort to improve over one's own record, or, better still, to accomplish something in the way of self-development or service. That this kind of competition can be used even with little children is proved by the health campaigns in the schools in recent years, where the children eagerly study their own charts and quite earnestly follow suggestions in the effort to better their own scores. It ought to be possible for the Sunday school to use methods of this kind more and to resort less to unwholesome types of "prizefighting" and contests.

Of course another bad feature of many contests is the "slump" or reaction that so frequently follows. Usually such methods do not contribute to normal, healthy growth and progress.

III. Better Methods

After all, what we need to realize is that there are better methods of securing the wholehearted coöperation and activity of pupils in the work of the class. There is something wrong, we cannot doubt,

whenever we have to resort to contests and prizes to get our pupils to come and study and pay attention.

Desire to Please Others: Cautions.—Pupils sometimes study because they wish to please parents or teachers. Such a motive is not in itself unworthy. It cannot be doubted that frequently the thought of the joy to be given to father or mother or to the teacher is genuinely unselfish. And it is pathetic to see a little child whose efforts to do something for parents or teachers go unnoticed and unappreciated. But we need to be careful of the way in which we appeal even to this motive. There are dangers connected with it against which we must guard.

One is the danger of selfishness and self-seeking, as in the case of working for a prize. Frequently the desire is not to give pleasure but to get notice, to be singled out, to be set off as superior. Consequently self-consciousness is developed; or, sometimes, a very objectionable tendency to display one's accomplishments in a bid for attention and praise.

Expressions of approval and praise may very well follow good work. But the desire for such rewards is not the most commendable nor the most valuable of motives. Even when it does operate it should operate along with other motives.

The Ideal: Study Growing Out of Genuine Interest.—The ideal may be stated thus: what we really want is the kind of Sunday school class to which people love to go, not the kind to which they have to be compelled or bribed to go; we want the kind of lessons that people like to study, not the kind that they have to be made to study by some artificial scheme; we want the kind of teaching that makes it impossible for the pupils not to pay attention, instead of the kind that makes paying attention a constant effort.

The Little Child and His Sunday School.—Is such a Sunday school possible? Let us see: do you think the average beginner or primary pupil in your Sunday school loves to go to Sunday school? Does he love to hear the stories from his lesson leaf? Does he love to do the things his teacher asks him to do in Sunday school? There can be little doubt of your answer if you have the kind of elementary departments that you ought to have. But when we get up into the Junior or the Intermediate or the Senior Department we become less and less sure of our answer. Why is it? Well, in the case of the little folks, Sunday school workers have learned to talk about things that they can understand and are inter-

ested in; to use methods—play and story-telling and the like—that really suit the minds and hearts and bodies of the tots. We no longer try to teach them theological abstractions in the form of a catechism; we no longer try to force their minds or bodies into miniature adult molds. Rather, what we try to do is to give religious meaning and religious value to childish interests and childish activities, and to use them and direct them as a means of character development. God then becomes more than a name. He is a real part of the child's experience; the thought of him is suggested by mother and father, brothers and sisters, pets and birds and flowers, sunrise and sunset, the stars and the clouds and the mountains, even the dark and the storm. No one can question that this does happen who has known a little child favored with a chance at this sort of teaching in Sunday school or home.

The Problem with Older Pupils.—But with the older boys and girls, often we do not do so well. It is partly because we do not know how. The task is a more difficult one. The individual boys and girls are becoming increasingly different as personality develops. New interests and impulses continually appear that are difficult to understand or to deal with.

Other influences are working, perhaps in opposition to Sunday school and home. The Sunday school at this age no longer interests and therefore no longer holds the boys and girls. And those who do come for one reason or another—home influence or what not—often fail to put into or get out of the Sunday school what they should.

Not only is the task more difficult. We have sometimes failed to realize that with Intermediates and Seniors, just as much as with Beginners and Primaries and Juniors, the lessons and the methods must fit the interests and capacities of the pupils. This, of course, does not mean carrying over Primary methods into the upper grades. It means quite radically different methods and quite radically different types of lessons. What it involves, however, with older pupils just as much as with younger ones, is first of all trying to understand the pupils: their needs, their interests, their capacities; and trying to solve every problem as to organization, material, method, equipment, in the light of these facts about the pupils and with a view to what can be done toward helping the pupils.

Some General Suggestions.—How, then, shall we get our pupils to work? How shall we get them to

come regularly and promptly? How shall we get them to pay attention and to take part in the class-work? Here is the kind of answer that may be suggested:

(1) Know your pupils. Know the general characteristics of the period of development to which they belong; and, more important still, know them as individuals. Our training courses quite rightly emphasize the general and specialization courses in pupil study. But we must not be content with book knowledge. We must know, at first hand, all we can about our own boys and girls.

(2) Have a lesson that gives the pupils something they need, something that they will be interested in, something that to them as well as to you seems genuinely worth while. This is the principle underlying the graded lessons that are coming more and more generally into use, and which are becoming, with revisions growing out of experience, more and more nearly what we need. The point here is that the teacher cannot use the graded lessons intelligently who does not understand the reason for graded lessons and who does not consider the lessons he is to teach primarily as means of helping the boys and girls in his class. Pupils first; lesson

material a means, not an end—a means to helping the pupils.

(3) Use methods that fit the dispositions and interests of your particular group. Some of the special methods are to be discussed in later chapters; but the choice of methods is largely a matter for the individual teacher to settle with reference to his own class. General prescriptions are impossible.

Interest and Work.—We may be very sure that with the right kind of lessons and the right kind of methods—lesson material and methods both of which *fit the pupils*—the problems of getting attention and of getting lesson study and class work will be solved. Boys and girls will work at things in which they are interested. And make no mistake. They will *work*. No one can question this who has ever seen a boy—at play, we say—sweating over the construction of a dam for a new swimming hole, or a hut for the gang to play in, or a fort to defend against the enemy. He is playing but he is also doing hard work. Work need not be drudgery. The best work is interesting work. The best workers are interested workers. That work is, for adults or children, most fruitful of growth and development into which the play spirit enters.

The ideal we are suggesting does not mean making everything easy or letting pupils whimsically do as they please. It is apt to mean much harder work on the part of pupils. It means finding a motive in the pupil's own life and genuinely enlisting instead of conscripting him in coöperative work in the Sunday school.

When we come to discuss the assignment of the lesson certain practical suggestions will be made which may be helpful in connection with this matter of getting pupils to study. But these devices will not work unless the important and fundamental conditions we have been discussing are met.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it true that a pupil's motives for studying have much to do with the good his study does him?
2. Would you ever use punishment and threats to get your pupils to study? Explain and defend your answer.
3. Do you offer prizes in your Sunday school? Do you see objections to them as they have been used? Explain carefully.
4. Do you have contests in your Sunday school? Have the results been good? Have there been objectionable features? Could the methods of conducting them be improved?

5. Should the Sunday school pupil be urged to study and do well in order to please parents or teacher? Explain and defend your answer.

6. Do the pupils in your Sunday school like the School? Do they like their lessons? How can you tell?

7. At what do you work best, things in which you are interested or uninteresting things which you have to do?

8. Is all interesting work easy? Is all hard work uninteresting? Explain.

9. Do your pupils study their lessons? Try to determine the reasons for their doing so or failing to do so. What methods will you try out to get better study?

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF THE CLASS HOUR: STORY TELLING

I. The Power of the Story

All children love stories. And in this respect as in many others the child is father to the man, for it is just as true that everybody loves stories. Apparently they meet some deep need in human nature, for ever since there have been people there have been stories and tellers of stories. This universality of appeal is one reason, and an important one, why the story is one of our most valuable methods of teaching—one of the favorite methods of the Great Teacher himself.

The story form is the most effective because it is the most interesting way in which a truth can be presented. It impels to action as a cold, unadorned, statement never can, because it stirs sentiment and arouses feeling. Some of the greatest reformers of history have been novelists. A striking illustration of this is found in the famous English writer, Charles Dickens, who was born a little more than a

hundred years ago, and was the popular idol when the grandmothers of some of us were children. At this time England still clung to the cruel system of imprisoning men who could not pay their debts; and many poor wretches, who had no relatives to pay them out, spent their lives in prison, the hopeless, helpless, pensioners of a society which thus made paupers of them at its own expense. Then Charles Dickens wrote *Little Dorrit*—a novel which told in detail of the life of one of those unfortunates and his family, and which showed as nothing else could have done the cruelty, the wrong, and the uselessness of the law. He might have flooded all England with pamphlets and treatises and never have produced one-half the effect that this book did. The poor old Father of the Marshalsea and his pathetic, maternal, little daughter went straight to the hearts of hundreds of readers, and a wave of indignation swept the land which resulted in the abolition of debtor's prisons. It was so with other evils. Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby,* for instance, gives a heartbreakingly vivid picture of the inhuman boarding schools for boys which flourished at that time with utterly unscrupulous men as their heads. There is no more pitiful and abject figure in literature than Smike,

boy-victim of the brutality of Squeers, one of these schoolmasters. England read and wept; and the Squeerses of the land had to go.

Thus the story influences life and conduct as truth presented in the abstract fails to do. Facts are vitalized, made real and vivid; virtue and vice are no longer vague terms but actualities embodied in living personalities, influencing us to avoid the evil and strive for the good. The story gives to truth a dynamic power which as mere theory it often lacks. This is where the story so greatly helps the teacher—in making great truths glow with life and reality. We say "Be good—be gentle—be brave—be unselfish" and our pupils yawn in our faces or listen with polite inattention. If we ask them, "Don't you think that these are noble qualities?" doubtless they will dutifully agree with us. But as a matter of fact, the words mean nothing to them. They are in no way related to their lives or any of their interests. They are not alive for them. But tell a story—an interesting story—showing the loveliness of virtue in lives like theirs, and the ugliness of wrong and selfishness and cowardice, and you will see the listless eyes brighten and the bored young faces light up. The cold truth is warmed for them with the fire of

reality, and becomes, not an abstract theory, but a living factor in their everyday experience.

II. What Is a Good Story?

Interesting.—Of course one cannot produce this happy effect with just any story. And this brings us to the question of what constitutes a good story. First of all what is a story? The dictionary definition is that it is a narrative of an event or series of events, real or fictitious. This may make a story; it does not necessarily make a good story. For a *good* story must possess something more. It must appeal to the imagination and the emotions of the listener. One of the greatest authorities on stories for children says that a story is a picture presented to the mind's eye that arouses intense interest and feeling. For our purpose this is a better definition. We may say, then, that the first essential of a good story is that it must be interesting. What are some of the things that make a story interesting?

Dramatic.—One thing is the appeal to the love we all have for the dramatic—a trait which is strongest of all in the child. Nothing else appeals so strongly to him and it is the most effective way of interesting him. Conflict, action, plot, suspense—all these help

to make a dramatic story. It is noticeable that nearly all the great Bible stories possess these characteristics. Read again, with this in mind, the stories of Joseph, of Moses, of Daniel, of David, of Elijah, of Jonah.

Full of Action.—The interesting story is a story that abounds in action. Description is brief. Characters best reveal themselves by their words and deeds, not by your description of them. Study some of the great story-tellers of secular literature. One of the best instances of this particular sort of talent is found in Jane Austen, a young Englishwoman of the eighteenth century, who wrote a handful of novels that are almost photographic in their portrayal of the life of her particular circle at that time. Rarely does she describe either the appearance or the character of any of the figures which move so realistically through her pages. She does not need to for they are revealed by their own words—Mrs. Bennett, selfish, shallow, scheming, rattle-brained, garrulous; Jane, gentle, beautiful, not very keen mentally; Elizabeth, arch, witty, high-minded, but proud and impulsive—we know them all as we know our intimate friends. Not once are we told "Elizabeth Bennett had unusual charm of personality." It

is not necessary to say it, for we feel it and are under its spell before *Pride and Prejudice* is half read.

And "full of action" does not mean "full of words." Often the fewer words you use the more effective is your story. In *Vanity Fair* Thackeray pictures a young wife listening to the noise of the battle in progress a few miles away—a battle in which her husband is fighting. And then he writes "No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face with a bullet through his heart." These simple words move the reader as pages of lengthy description could not do.

The stories Jesus told are stories of what people did. How well we understand without description, the characters of the "wicked and slothful servant" in the parable of the talents in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew; or of the Pharisee and the publican who prayed together in the temple; or of the priest and the Levite and the Samaritan in the great story that answers the lawyer's question "Who is my neighbor?" In that story it is "a certain Samaritan" who "was moved with compassion, and came to him,

and bound up his wounds—and took care of him." There is no single word to describe the character of this "certain Samaritan"; yet he is to every one who knows the story the *"Good* Samaritan." His character we know through his words and his deeds. Jesus, the Great Teacher, was a master story-teller; his recorded stories have never been surpassed as models of graphic character painting by means of action and spoken word.

Adapted.—The story must be adapted to the capacities and interests of the particular group to whom it is told. The five-year-old would not understand the story suited to the ten-year-old, and the ten-year-old would scorn as babyish the little tale which thrills the mite of five. Juniors and Adults are interested in different things and have to be approached differently. And one argument against the mixed class is that boys and girls of the same age do not care for the same things. The teacher may be quite successful in the use of a certain story with a class of twelve-year-old girls, and fail utterly to arouse interest in the same story told to a class of boys of twelve.

True to Life.—But the story in religious education must be something more than interesting. It

must also be thoroughly worth telling. It must contribute to the aim of the Sunday school teacher. It must serve a moral and religious purpose. It must have real meaning; it must teach in concrete fashion some lesson worth teaching. This does not mean that we need to tack our moral on too plainly. We scarcely need to point the moral at all if the story is really a good one. It will carry its own lesson. If it is to do this, in other words if the story is really to be a means of teaching, it must be true to life.

Being true to life does not mean, of course, being true to fact. A fairy tale may be true to life, if its lesson is true and it does not leave the listener with false notions and mistaken values. The sentimental type of story which shows virtue always rewarded and vice punished, the hero triumphant and the villain slinking away in disgrace, is not true to life. Virtue is not always rewarded in a material way nor is vice so punished, as the child is sure to find out for himself in time. Far better for your story to show that the development of a splendid character is its own reward and in itself the greatest achievement possible to a man, whether materially rewarded or not; and that collapse of character, whether at-

tended by material failure or brilliant worldly success, means failure at every point in the real sense, and is the greatest tragedy the world ever sees.

There is another type of sentimental story which was more popular twenty or thirty years ago than it is now, fortunately—those tales of super-angelic children who never did anything wrong. They were far, far, too good to be true, and a normal child could not but feel this and resent them. Louisa Alcott's boys and girls, normal, fun-loving, yet keenly responsive and alive to ideals of nobility and courage, and the boy hero of *Tom Brown's School Days,* are more wholesome friends. For they are human and real, struggling like ourselves, sometimes falling down, but always "keeping their wagons hitched to a star"; and their influence is stronger and better than that of the self-righteous little prigs of some popular series of children's books.

III. The Use of the Story

In teaching little children in the Sunday school the story itself is the lesson. Catechism and memory drill have no place here; they have given way to the story—told by the teacher and retold in word or song or game by the children. Nor is the story ever

outgrown. As introduction, as basis for discussion, as illustration, it finds its place in every department from primary to adult. The Sunday school teacher must be able to tell a story well, whatever the age of his pupils.

IV. Preparing to Tell the Story

Story-telling requires preparation and practise. The best of stories can lose all effectiveness if told in an ineffective way. All that enters into one's life may be thought of as preparation for story-telling. The best stories of the great teachers have been those that have come out of their own experience. The richer our background of experience and study the more we will have to put into the stories we use in religious teaching. Few of us can hope to attain to our ideal of preparation or personality; but we do need to realize that teaching by means of stories demands the best that we have and that no time spent in getting ready for the task is wasted.

Familiarity.—With a particular story selected for use, the teacher should first read it over several times in order to become thoroughly familiar with it. Most expert story-tellers advise against memorizing the story. This is apt to make the telling of it seem

artificial and mechanical. But the story-teller must be thoroughly familiar with his story if it is to be told smoothly.

Analysis.—After the first two or three readings it will be helpful to analyze the story so as to fix the incidents in definite order. Determine just how you will begin. Have in your mind a skeleton outline of the events. Know how the characters are to be introduced. Pay particular attention to the climax, and the way in which it is to be made most effective. Know how you expect to end the story. The whole effect of the story may be spoiled by the wrong sort of ending—by talking to no purpose when the story is really over.

Practice.—And then—practice. Tell it—and then tell it again—and again. This does not mean just saying over the words. The aim is not to memorize it. The aim should be to imagine an audience before you and to try to make your telling of the story as smooth, as dramatic, as effective, as you will wish it to be when you stand before a real audience. One of the most popular and successful preachers of Southern Methodism owes much of his power as a preacher to his effective use of stories; and these

stories are rehearsed over and over again to imaginary audiences before they are ever told in the pulpit.

V. Telling the Story

Be Natural.—And when you stand before that real audience and begin to tell the story? *Be natural.* That is the first great injunction. All the arts of expression have their place; the varying tones and inflections of the voice, gesture, mimicry, facial expression. Study and practise of them will repay any story-teller. But all such aids to the story-teller should be natural expressions of genuine feeling. They should be spontaneous. Too much of them is worse than too little. They are better left out if they are artificial and affected. Too many obvious story-teller's tricks mar a story as almost nothing else can.

Be Easy.—Be easy, also, if you can. But whether you can at first achieve ease or not, remember that there are worse things than honest awkwardness. Being artificial is one of them. Ease will come in time with self-confidence and a really big interest in what you are doing. One successful teacher of teachers says: "I have seen awkward girls reconstruct themselves into beautifully poised women, girls who in the beginning were so crude that their

ambition to become story-tellers was a source of mingled amusement and pity to their friends. Yet they succeeded in accomplishing the seemingly impossible because they set out with determination and never deviated from their purpose. Anyone possessed of intelligence and will-power can do as much." [1]

Begin Well.—The story must have a good beginning. It must be interesting from the first sentence. Otherwise your class may stop listening before they have really begun. Newspapermen know this secret and take care that their headlines and their first sentences shall arouse interest and curiosity; and while we would not advise studying newspapers to attain good style, or an imitation of the newspaper's sensational methods of starting an article, nevertheless the general principle on which they construct their "stories"—arousing interest from the beginning—is one that it is well to keep in mind.

Avoid Wandering.—Do not delay in introducing the main characters. Then move swifty and logically toward the climax. Discipline yourself sternly the moment you find that you want to wander away from the main theme into this by-path and that.

[1] Cather, *Story Telling*, p. 74.

The by-paths may be attractive, but you will never get very far unless you stick to the main road. A good story must have unity, and all unnecessary details and unrelated incidents should be left out.

Stop When Through.—And stop when you get through. Do not spoil the effect of a good story by explaining and interpreting and moralizing. If the story has been well told it will teach its own lesson. If it has failed to do so, you cannot help matters by talking about it.

Use Direct Discourse.—Let your characters do their own talking. Use direct rather than indirect discourse. Study some of the stories that Jesus used in his teaching; note how the characters speak for themselves. Turn, for example, to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and the eleventh to the fourteenth chapters of Luke.

Or suppose the great story of the prodigal son had been told in this way: "But when he came to himself and remembered how many of his father's hired servants had bread enough and to spare while he perished with hunger, he resolved to arise and go to his father and tell him that he had sinned against God and his father and that he was no longer worthy to be called his father's son but wished only to be

one of the hired servants. And so he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And when the son told him he no longer felt himself worthy to be called his son, the father answered by calling the servants to bring out the best robe and a ring and shoes, and to kill the fatted calf and make merry; because he had been afraid that his son was dead, and he was alive. He had mourned him as lost, but now he was found."

How flat and colorless in comparison with the Bible story. Read that story again. Hear the anguished cry of the son, straight from his penitent heart: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight! I am no more worthy to be called thy son!"; and the tender, exultant, forgiving reply of the father: "Bring forth quickly the best robe and put it on him! And put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and make merry! For this, my son, was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found!" All the love and the joy of fatherhood rings in the cry, just as all the love and the pain of fatherhood sounds in the tragic wail of David in one

of the most moving of the Old Testament stories: "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Other Aids.—Be simple. Do not use long, involved sentences. Do not hurry. Better take your time and break off unfinished "to be continued" than to hurry. This does not mean dragging, of course. Try to make your voice pleasing and free from shrillness and discord, or any evidence of strain. But do not affect an artificial "sweetness" of voice or manner. Dramatic effect may be heightened by varying the voice, suiting the tones, as far as possible, to the characters; and by sudden, unexpected pauses in the midst of a sentence. Study the methods of good story-tellers with reference to these suggestions—not with a view to imitating them artificially, but with the purpose to adopt those methods that you can use naturally and easily.

Tell It.—Above all—*tell* your story. Do not read—whether from an actual or an imagined printed page. Your purpose is not to "give a reading" but to "tell a story." The book must not come between the story-teller and his audience. And it may do so sometimes when the story-teller is repeating mem-

orized words as well as when actually reading. It is not the story that has been memorized, but the story that has been made your own and into whose spirit you have entered that can be effectively *told*.

Be Yourself Interested.—And when all is said and done, perhaps the most important thing is to have yourself an overmastering, powerful interest in your story. If you have this the lack of other things may not be felt. Your sincerity and your earnestness will make you effective. This is not to discount what has been said about the importance of preparation and practice. But these things should grow out of genuine interest; and if the interest is lacking, they will be apt to avail little. Without interest your story will never have power and conviction, however smooth and plausible and skilfull your telling of it may be. We all know from experience how true this is. We have all heard polished, beautifully prepared and delivered addresses that left us cold. And then perhaps we have listened to some preacher in a little country church or on a street corner—perhaps crude, ungrammatical, yet terribly in earnest; and we have felt ourselves stirred and lifted by his great sincerity. The reality of your message through the story will be in proportion to the depth and sin-

cerity of your conviction. You must believe in your story. This, first of all.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Do you like stories? Why?
2. Do the children you know love stories? Why?
3. Make a list of the stories that the children you know like best. Consider these stories with reference to the characteristics of a good story mentioned in the chapter. Do they meet the test?
4. What is the objection to memorizing a story that you are to tell?
5. What is meant by analyzing a story? Of what value is it?
6. Why is it well to practice telling the story before using it in the class?
7. Outline the steps in the story-teller's preparation.
8. What is the difference between "giving a reading" and "telling a story"? What would you do in getting ready to tell a story?
9. What things would you keep in mind in trying to improve your own manner of telling a story?
10. Should a story-teller try to imitate the manner of another? Explain your answer. What questions would you ask about a story in determining whether to use it or not?
11. Should gestures be practiced? Defend your answer.
12. Why should the story-teller be himself interested?
13. Select some Bible story that would be likely to interest your class; study it, analyze it, and practice retelling it in your own words.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS OF THE CLASS HOUR: LECTURE AND DISCUSSION

With little children the story is the main method of teaching. With older children, with young people, with adults, the story still has its place and value. But with them it becomes subordinate, as illustration or as basis for discussion. With classes in the departments above the primary we find the methods of the class hour varying all the way from the formal lecture to the most informal "talking over" of the lesson.

I. The Lecture

The Place of Telling.—Telling has its part in any teaching procedure, of course. We would be in a sad plight if we were not able to profit by the experience and knowledge of others and had to learn everything for ourselves at first hand. Much information can be provided by the teacher that could be acquired by the pupil through his own efforts only at wasteful and needless expense of time and labor, if at all. This is one of the functions of the

teacher: to enable the pupil to profit by the experience of the past in economical fashion.

Value of the Lecture.—There are some people who would not come to Sunday school at all if they thought they would be called on to say anything—to answer a question or to contribute in any way to a discussion. Perhaps any reader can think of some person who is filled with terror at the idea of so much as reading a Scripture passage aloud before a group. Limitations of early training or experience, undue timidity, lack of self-confidence may account for such feeling. The Sunday school should provide for such people. They may love to come to Sunday school; they may be able to contribute to the Sunday school in various ways; they can undoubtedly be greatly helped by a good lecture delivered by a well-prepared teacher who is competent to bring a pointed message in attractive form.

Many large adult classes find that the class hour on Sunday morning is best used when given over to a lecture of this kind. When such a class has its well-organized program of social and service activities, enlisting all its members for fellowship and helpfulness, its educational value cannot be questioned. Busy people who feel that they cannot find

time for study of the Sunday school lesson, as well as those who are reluctant for personal reasons to take part in the class hour, may be reached and helped through such an organization when they could not be attracted by any other type of class.

The lecture method of teaching has, of course, obvious advantages. One of them has just been suggested; it will appeal to many who could not be reached in any other way. Further than this, the lecture is economical of time and of effort. It enables the teacher to develop in clear, logical, orderly fashion the ideas that he wishes to impress upon the members of the class on this particular Sunday morning. Once the teacher has carefully prepared the material to be presented, there is no waste motion, or loss of time in getting to the point, no getting side-tracked by an unexpected suggestion from some member of the class, no getting hung up by some knotty question. The lecture, well prepared, moves smoothly, easily, directly, systematically in the development of the lesson. These are distinct advantages—*if* one can be sure always that the members of the class are going *with* the lecturer, are thinking *with* him, are actually learning as well as listening.

Limitations of the Lecture Method.—And this "if" suggests at once the serious limitations of the lecture as a method of teaching. The lecture may stimulate thought and action on the part of the hearers; the better the lecture the more apt it is to do so; ideally it should always do so. But it may not. It is quite possible for the member of the lecture class to sit perfectly passive, mentally and physically, thinking nothing during the lecture and doing nothing about it afterwards. Growth comes through activity. The ideal class method will be a method that *insures* activity as a part of the learning process. Mental activity, thinking, can be insured only when the pupil is expected to take part in, to contribute to, the development of the lesson in class.

This perhaps, then, may be said: that the lecture should never be so formal as to prevent an interested hearer from asking a question or starting a discussion. Two sermons a day are usually provided in the church services; another is not needed. The Sunday school lecturer should seek to cultivate an atmosphere of informality and freedom.

And this further: out of many large adult lecture classes it would be well to organize small groups for

special courses of study. Such groups would not need to lose their identity with the larger organization. Their membership could be determined on the basis of special interest in some particular topic. The special course might run for a quarter or a year or longer. Leaders of adults should secure information about the various attractive courses for such group study.[1]

II. The Discussion Method

The Need for Thinking.—An idea or a bit of knowledge is never wholly our own until we have used it in some way, have done something with it. That teacher is contributing most to the intellectual and spiritual growth of his pupils who is constantly demanding that his pupils think: use their knowledge, organize it, relate it to their own lives, apply it. Such a teacher will supply information only when the need for it is felt by the pupils in order that they may have help in answering some question or in solving some problem; and such a teacher will furnish opportunity and place responsibility upon pupils for discovering facts and truth for themselves.

[1] Write to the Department of Adult Work, General Sunday School Board, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tennessee.

Some Illustrations.—"The Secret of David's Success" was the topic for Young People and Adults on a certain Sunday. A class of young people or adults might very well have listened with profit to a lecture designed to bring out the character of true success. But how much more fruitful would be a discussion culminating in such topics as these:

"We constantly praise success, but seldom ask what it is. Who are usually considered 'the most successful men in town'? Would we call Jesus a success to-day? Paul? Nero? What was Jesus's standard of success (Mark 10. 42-45)? What kind of people do we remember as heroes? Who are living successful lives about us to-day?" [3]

We may profitably consider some additional illustrations. In the suggestions as to teaching method that follows notice how the pupils are being called on to think, to express their own judgments, to draw their own conclusions.

A lesson for Seniors and Intermediates had as its subject "The Helping Hand"; the Scripture passage is the story of the healing of the lame man by Peter and John (Acts 3: 1-16). In "How I Would

[3] *Sunday School Magazine*, July, 1920, p. 454.

Teach the Lesson," Professor Harris says (we quote only a part):

"Time permitting, I should try to help my class see the really large and the really scientific thing that Peter did: He gave not alms; he gave himself, and in giving he put the man on the road to self-support and self-respect. I should do this to counteract the impression that a little charity in the way of small giving is the end of our Christian obligations. To open the discussion I should ask: Why was it better to cure the man than to give him alms? What is our responsibility toward such unfortunates today? Are we fulfilling the spirit of Peter and of Jesus in the orthopedic wards of our hospitals? To press the matter still further home, I would ask how we treat the beggars in our community. Is such treatment really Christian?"[*]

A lesson from the Old Testament deals with the call of Moses to deliver Israel. Here is a part of the Teaching Plan:

"Call for Advance Assignment 4. (This calls for the experience with the burning bush.) Was not Moses being prepared through all the past years for this very call? Preparation for service in a large measure constitutes a call to service. Why did Moses hesitate? God assured him that he too was thinking of Israel and had heard their cries and that he would be a divine ally to Moses. Yet Moses hesitated. Do you suppose that he was afraid to

[*] *Sunday School Magazine,* January, 1920, p. 39.

go back to Egypt? 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?' (Exodus 3:11.) Picture Moses as he really was—an old, rugged, shaggy-haired, sun-burned desert shepherd. He is to go before the mightiest monarch in all the earth. He is to issue a command of God to this king. 'Let my people go.' Think of the courage needed for such a task. Then on the other hand Moses was troubled and hesitated on thinking of the response the people might make. Remember they had distrusted him before his exile. (Exodus 2:11-14.) There were two million slaves to be set in motion. One man to lead so many! Moses wanted every assurance he could get. What should he tell the people? Would they not again be suspicious of Moses? How did God reassure Moses? Read Exodus 4:1-7. Show that God answers all excuses. (Exodus 4:10-15.)

". . . Were the excuses of Moses similar to the excuses we make? Do not we shrink from hard tasks? Moses was living a quiet, peaceful life, but God has a different plan for him. Can you imagine the results to Israel and to the world if Moses had refused to heed God's call?"[4]

And here are some questions suggested for class discussion with adults. The subject of the lesson is "Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis"; the Scripture passage 2 Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 36-38:

1. What is your estimate of Hezekiah as a statesman? What of him as a religious man? Does the fact that a man is good prove that he is wise? In deciding how to

[4] *Sunday School Magazine,* January, 1924, p. 54.

cast our votes, what qualities should we look for in a candidate? Do we always find them? Where some of them are lacking, which qualities should we select? Do we take the responsibility of the ballot as seriously as we should? Explain your answer.

2. Did any good come of Hezekiah's prayer? What might have been the situation if he had prayed sooner? Should public men of to-day be men of prayer?

3. How did God send his answer to the king's prayer?

4. How had Sennacherib blasphemed? Do men blaspheme against God these days? Explain your answer.

5. Is prayer worth anything to us? If so, in what respect?[5]

Difficulties of the Method.—Looking over a list of questions such as this immediately suggests, however, some of the difficulties of the discussion method. Obviously, a lesson hour of the sort we are now suggesting is very different from one in which the teacher simply "hears the lesson" in mechanical fashion. There should be an air of informality and freedom. But this very freedom has its dangers. One of these dangers lies in the over-talkative member of the class who wants to have the floor all the time and exploit all his ideas, important and unimportant. The reticent, retiring, person who may have ideas but who needs much encouragement to

[5] *The Adult Student*, May, 1924, p. 231.

express them presents an opposite difficulty. Tact and skill in dealing with both these types are needed. Frequently a quiet word in private may be effective. "I appreciate your interest and help in the lesson period; but I am anxious to draw out some of the others next Sunday," may obviate the need for more direct methods with the talkative one; reporting on a definite topic assigned in advance may get the quiet member started.

One of the greatest difficulties with the discussion method, next to keeping it going at all, is that of holding it on the main track, once it is started. It is so easy to get off on a side track and never get back to the main line at all. Some member of the class may fasten on some minor or irrelevant point and make it difficult for the teacher to lead the discussion away from that point in the direction in which he wishes it to go. And the hobby-rider, who has some pet theory or notion which he can connect with any and every topic that comes up, is the bane of any teacher who has ever encountered him in a discussion group.

There is the further danger that the teacher, instead of actually leading a discussion that calls out the ideas of the pupils and helps in their organiza-

tion, may too greatly dominate the class by talking too much, by forcing his opinions on the group, by leaving too little leeway for differences of opinion and for frankness in their expression. Ideally the teacher is simply the group leader, working with the other members for the discovery of truth and its significance for living.

Its Advantages.—But, with all its difficulties, the group discussion or conference method, when it can be carried on successfully, remains the most nearly ideal of all teaching methods. It is democratic. It insures activity on the part of the member of the group. It enables the teacher to know just what ideas the members of the class bring to the class hour and just what ideas they carry away. It forces the members of the class to form their own judgments rather than to accept in passive fashion, or unthinkingly to reject, those presented by the teacher. It stays close to the real interests and ideas and ideals of the group.

III. Essentials to a Good Discussion

A Prepared Teacher.—The two chief requisites for a successful discussion class are (1) a well prepared teacher and (2) a well prepared class. The

teacher who is satisfied just to "hear lessons" may content himself with "knowing the answers" to the questions which the class has been expected to study. The lecturer may select just exactly those things which he wishes to present and let the rest go. But the teacher who wishes to lead a discussion must prepare carefully and thoroughly, and must cover a wide range if he is to be ready for unexpected issues. This need not be too terrifying. The good teacher is always ready to say "I don't know." Bluffing is always fatal with any class. Questions raised at one class period may very well be carried over to the next and looked up by teacher and class in the meantime. Nevertheless, no method of teaching demands such careful and thorough preparation as the discussion if it is to be vital, if it is to escape pointless superficiality, and if it is to head up in definite conclusions.

A Prepared Class.—Equally essential is preparation on the part of the class,—careful and thorough if not so extensive or intensive as that of the teacher. It gives a teacher a very helpless feeling to attempt to lead a discussion and to discover that no member of the class has given the topic a moment's thought

in advance. Our earlier chapter on getting pupils to study related more definitely to younger pupils, perhaps. Yet the principle is the same. Success in getting pupils to study will depend primarily on the interest the topics to be studied may have for them. And this will depend on the teacher's ability to select topics that have vital relation to the pupils' own lives and to present them in such a way that the relationship will be apparent. Beyond this, success in getting pupils to study will depend very largely upon the care with which assignments are made. On this point we may refer again to the practical suggestions made in a later chapter of this book.

This "discussion" method, which makes the heaviest demands in preparation, in skill, in patience, in tact, is the method that will be most rewarding in results to the teacher who sets himself to master it. The sense of its difficulties should not deter the teacher from attempting to use it. The frank, informal talking together of a group from The Junior age up, will contribute more than any other teaching method to growth in knowledge and intellect, in social interest and insight, in worthy attitudes and ideals.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the place of "telling" in teaching?
2. Are there classes in your Sunday school in which the lecture method is used? Is it the right method with those classes? Explain your answer.
3. Summarize the advantages and the disadvantages of the lecture method.
4. What is meant by the "discussion" method? How does it differ from "hearing lessons"?
5. What would you mention as the advantages of the discussion method?
6. What difficulties have you encountered or observed in a discussion lesson?
7. What are the essentials to a good discussion?

CHAPTER V

METHODS OF THE CLASS HOUR: ASKING QUESTIONS

Anybody can ask questions. But not everybody can ask intelligent questions. And the questions that the teacher asks of a class must be intelligent—and more. The skillful use of questions in teaching is an art. It may look easy. But it is the most experienced teacher and the most skillful who will most readily testify to the contrary. To use questions in such a way that they really teach is an ability which the teacher needs carefully to cultivate.

I. The Purpose of Questions

The test to which we should bring our questioning is suggested in this last sentence. Our questions should really teach. Frequently we think of questions simply as a means of finding out what the pupils know about the lesson. This is one purpose for which questions need sometimes to be used. But teaching is more than "hearing lessons." And testing the pupil's knowledge is perhaps the least

important of the purposes of the teacher's questions.

Questions that really help the teacher teach are questions that do more than pump out information that the pupil has stored up in preparation for this particular test. They are questions that will make the pupil think. They will help him to organize and apply his knowledge. They will perhaps suggest other questions and start him out on lines of inquiry and investigation. They will stimulate him to want to know more. They will help to understanding, to mental growth, to mastery.

Let us, then, think of the question as a teaching device. And when we so regard it we will realize that we can well afford to give some thought to the kind of questions we ask and the way we ask them.

II. Making Questions Clear and Definite

Avoid Big Words.—A good question will first of all be clear. This means that it will be clear, not only to the teacher, but to the pupil. The teacher will then need to avoid using words that are meaningless to the pupil, that are beyond his comprehension. "What is the eschatological meaning of the apocalypse of John?" may be a suitable question for a theological professor to use with a seminary class.

It would be meaningless to most Sunday school classes of adults, to say nothing of younger pupils. A Sunday school teacher was once very much puzzled by a question in a quarterly: "What arguments against antinomianism does Paul use in this passage?" The pupils who were studying the quarterly were certainly no less helpless than the teacher.

Avoid Confusing Constructions.—Long and involved questions will confuse and befuddle. Here is a sample: "What was there in the attitude of Zaccheus toward God, as indicated by his treatment of the great teacher who had come to visit him—it is, of course, not clear whether or not he recognized him as Messiah—and in his attitude toward men as expressed in his resolution to make restitution even though he was under no legal obligation to do so, that shows him to have come into a new experience and a new conception of life and that, therefore, led Jesus to tell him that salvation had come to his house that day?" There are no particularly perplexing and technical words here. But even as we read we find ourselves lost in a maze of mental parentheses. The question in class would be better broken up into a number of questions, growing the one out of the other.

Avoid Questions Admitting More Than One Answer.—Most teachers have had the experience of asking a question that a pupil could not answer and then of getting the answer promptly when the form of the question was changed. Then, too, most teachers have had the experience of getting answers to their questions that were entirely correct and yet that were not the answers expected. Such an experience always means that the question was lacking in clearness and definiteness. And this may not always be due to obscure or involved wording.

"What happened when the Israelites were delivered from the land of Egypt?" This question may be answered with perfect correctness in any one of a number of different ways. "What about —?" is a poor way to begin any question. "Who was Matthew?" "What kind of man was Ananias?" "Who were the disciples?" "Why did Paul cross over to Europe on this missionary journey?" "Where was Bethany?" "Describe the situation of Samaria." "What does a boy have to do when he wants to enter a running race?" "How did Stephen meet his death?" "What great service did David render his country?" "What two paths in life were open to Moses?" "Into what two divi-

sions may the word 'recreation' be divided so as to show its true meaning?" "What does it mean to be a Christian?"—these are examples of questions, that, without obscurity of wording or construction, obviously lack definiteness and precision. Ask them of two or three friends and see if they mean the same thing to all. Then see if you can make them more definite in their meaning.

Avoid Double Questions.—Sometimes questions are confusing because they include more than one question. "To whom did Jesus quote the words of Deuteronomy 4:5, and what other command did he couple with this one?" "When did the prophet Isaiah live and where did he deliver his message?" "Who went with Paul and where did they go?" "What kind of a ruler was he and what reforms did he make?"—such questions are much better broken up and asked separately.

"In today's lesson who killed what strong man and how?" Such a question is more of a riddle than anything else. Did you ever hear similar ones asked?

Avoid Questions That Assume Too Much.—Sometimes questions cannot be rightly answered because they assume too much. "Why are educated

people harder to win for Christ than the uneducated?" Is the assumption that they are really justified? At any rate the question is not fair until the assumption back of it has been discussed. "Why do men in zeal for a righteous cause always become intolerant toward its enemies?" But do they?

The Need for Clear Thinking by the Teacher.— First of all, then, we must strive to make our questions clear, definite, direct. Otherwise they will call forth vague and indefinite answers or mere random guesses.

"Indefinite questioning usually comes from a lack of clear thinking on the part of the questioner. The teacher himself does not know precisely what he means to ask, and hence cannot be definite. It is safe to say that the teacher's questions covering a subject will never be any more clear or definite than the subject itself is in his mind. Indeed it is hard for one to be wholly definite in questioning even when he is a perfect master of his subject. Certainly, then, eternal vigilance will be the price of clearness and definiteness on the part of the young teacher who is as yet striving for mastery of what he is teaching."[1]

[1] Betts, *The Recitation*, p. 72.

III. Making Questions Thought-Provoking

Avoid Mere Fact Questions.—A second requirement of questions that really teach is that they shall demand thought on the part of the pupils who answer them.

Consider this series of questions: 1. What young man took charge of the long robes of the witnesses who stoned Stephen? 2. Why did Paul start for Damascus? 3. What made him fall on his face as he approached the city? 4. What did he hear? 5. What did the voice say? 6. What did Paul ask? 7. How was he answered? 8. How had Paul persecuted Jesus? 9. How did he enter Damascus? 10. How was Ananias led to come to Paul? 11. What did he do for Paul? 12. Is this Ananias the one who is famous as a liar? 13. What did Paul say in Acts 26:19 about this event?

Such a series might serve some purpose as "questions for the pupils to look up" for the next lesson; but they would have no place in the class hour if the teacher is concerned to do anything more than test memory for facts. They could not be answered by a pupil who had not studied, perhaps; but they could be answered in purely mechanical fashion by

the pupil who had; and the lesson hour would have made no contribution whatever to his development, mental or spiritual.

Avoid "Guessing" Questions.—"Is it not strange that a proud official of a king should be willing to come to a despised Galilean peasant?" Such a question, if asked for anything more than its rhetorical effect, carries its own answer in the very tone of voice with which it is uttered; no thought is demanded to answer it as the teacher wishes it answered. "Was Jesus carried first before Pilate or the high priest?" Here a mere guess has an even chance of being right.

Avoid "Pumping" Questions.—Here is a sample of a type of questioning that has occurred even in college classrooms: the information is "pumped out" by main force; the questions neither test nor teach.

Teacher: Then, after they had made a hole through the roof, they? (Long Pause.) Yes, they? Well, they let down?

Pupil: The man.

Teacher: Yes, the bed with the man on it. And it alighted at the feet of?

Pupil: Jesus.

Teacher: And Jesus seeing?

Pupil: The man.
Teacher: No, no; seeing their? Seeing their f——?
Pupil: Faith.
Teacher: Yes, faith; said to the man?
Pupil: "Thy sins are forgiven."
Teacher: Yes, quite right. Then the scribes said? Well, the scribes said, "Why doth this man speak? he——?"
Pupil: Blasphemeth.
Teacher: Yes, right again; who can forgive?
Pupil: Sins.
Teacher: Yes; but one, even?
Pupil: Jesus.
Teacher: No, they didn't say Jesus; one, even?
Pupil: God.[3]

Now turn to the series of "discussion questions" in Chapter IV for illustrations of questions that really demand thought.

IV. Asking Questions

Ask Them.—Much of the success of our questions will depend upon the way in which we ask them. It hardly needs to be said that they must be asked, not read. The teacher who needs to consult the lesson book for the questions has no right to deny the pupil the privilege of reading the answer out of the

[3] Adapted from Angus, *Ideals in Sunday School Teaching.*

book, too. Even if the teacher has formulated her own questions as a part of the teaching plan, the plan should have been so mastered as to enable the teacher to be independent of notes or outlines. Nothing should be allowed to come between the teacher and the class during the teaching period. And however carefully good questions have been prepared and mastered in advance they should not be used in mechanical fashion. Thorough preparation in advance should contribute to, rather than prevent, spontaneity and freedom in the teaching. The teacher must keep alive to the pupil's response to his questions and use this response as a suggestion for succeeding questions.

Some Definite Suggestions.—Ordinarily the question should be asked first and then some particular pupil called on to answer. To call on the pupil first is immediately to relieve the rest of the class of any sense of responsibility for that question. This will mean, of course, that there should be no definite order in calling on pupils to answer; and the pupil should be given time to formulate his answer. Usually it is better not to repeat a question, but simply to pass it on. If there is real reason for the failure to understand, fairness demands repetition.

But the danger is that, if pupils know that the question will be repeated, the habit of inattention to the first statement will develop, or asking for a repetition will be used as a means of "stalling."

V. The Pupils' Questions

And finally: one of the surest tests of a teacher's work is found in the questions of the pupils. The class that is really growing, really learning, will be interested. The interested class will ask questions. The teacher should encourage and welcome questions on the part of the pupils. There will be need sometimes for discrimination in dealing with trivial or irrelevant questions, or with questions that may be asked just for the purpose of creating an effect. But wherever a question is seriously asked because information or help with a difficulty are needed, too much care cannot be taken in the attempt to answer it fully and sympathetically. Such a question offers a rare chance to meet a real need at the most opportune time.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. For what different purposes may the teacher use questions? Make a list and be as definite as you can.

2. Should the teacher's questions be prepared in advance? Defend your answer.

3. Examine the questions at the end of the chapters in this book. Are there questions that could not be used as a part of the teaching during the class period? If you find such questions, explain why you think them unsuited for such use. Do the questions here meet the other requirements laid down?

4. Examine and criticize in the same way the questions suggested in the lesson helps that you use.

5. Write out a series of questions that you would ask on some recent Sunday school lesson. Then try them out on some fellow-student of this book and ask for criticism.

6. Why should questions not be read to the class?

7. Should questions asked in class be repeated? Explain.

8. Why is it best to ask the question before calling on the pupil to answer?

9. Should the teacher demand immediate answers? Explain your answer.

10. In what way do the pupils' questions really test the teacher's success?

11. How would you deal with the questions of your pupils?

12. Should there be examinations in the Sunday school? Explain your answer.

CHAPTER VI

METHODS OF THE CLASS HOUR: USING ILLUSTRATIONS

An effective illustration is a great aid in teaching. Popular preachers and public speakers are usually masters of the art of illustration. Teachers, no less than public speakers, need to cultivate skill in this art.

I. Objects as Illustrations

First-Hand Experience.—There are different kinds of illustrations, each having its place and value. One of the most valuable and effective kinds of illustration is employed when the teacher, instead of using words to describe a thing actually gives the pupil first-hand experience with the thing itself. The teacher of a class of Junior boys, talking about the temple at Jerusalem, used the word "column." "What is a column?" was the prompt question of a ten-year-old boy. How clear an idea would a dictionary definition have given? It so happened that the teacher was standing immediately in front of an

actual column as he talked. All he had to do was to put out his hand and say, "This is a column." No amount of description and definition will do as well as first-hand experience. Actually seeing, hearing, touching, are the best ways to learn about anything.

Compare your idea of the mountains before you ever saw piled up peaks with your knowledge after your first visit to Western North Carolina or the Rockies. How adequate was your imaginary picture of the ocean before you first stood on the seashore and looked out over the changeless and yet ever changing expanse of water? Did you really know the Mississippi or the Hudson before you had seen these streams? Could you really picture a city before your first eye-opening visit to a great metropolis?

Pictures, Models, Diagrams.—Where first-hand experience cannot be had, pictures, models, diagrams, and maps may be used toward the same end. Good prints can be had cheaply. Stereoscopic views of Bible and mission lands will help greatly in making real the scenes and incidents and characters studied about. Models of the ark, the temple, of oriental houses are better than architectural specifications and detailed descriptions. But pictures and models and diagrams may be misleading. A city child was once

discovered who thought a cow was about the size of a mouse. All that he knew of either he had learned from pictures in a book. And the pictures were the same size. Actually to see a Japanese, in native costume, eating rice with chopsticks is vastly more illuminating than any number of pictures and any amount of description. Nevertheless, the well-equipped Sunday school will be provided with as good a collection as possible of Bible and missionary pictures, models, curios. To the same end the skillful use of the blackboard may contribute.

Maps.—In the same connection may be mentioned the use of maps. Colored maps, outline maps to be filled in, maps constructed on the sand-table, all have proved their value in the Sunday school class. But here, too, misleading impressions may be left. Ask your Sunday school pupils next Sunday how large Palestine is in comparison with the county in which they live. Then give them a chance to investigate and determine for themselves. Ask yourself how large the island of Madagascar, off the coast of Africa, is in comparison, for example, with the state of Tennessee. Then measure the two. If your answer was off, why was it? Can you help to guard your pupils against similar wrong impressions?

Objects as Symbols: Their Limitations.—In connection with the use of objects, this should be carefully noted: the objects are properly used to give information about the things themselves. This is different from using them as symbols of moral and spiritual truths. A symbol is something that serves as a sign of something else. We use things as symbols when we use them to represent, in concrete fashion, something abstract or ideal or intangible. The value of such use of symbolism depends upon the ability to perceive the likeness between the symbol and the truth symbolized, and to disregard the differences. Most of us are familiar with such use of objects: the chemicals which transform the color of a glass of water and illustrate the power of sin in the life; the rat trap that represents the temptations that will catch the unwary; the nails driven in a board and pulled out, showing how the scars of sin remain; the rotten apple in a barrel, illustrating the danger of evil companions, and so on. One childish comment on this last illustration was "But people aren't apples." Children see things as wholes; they do not have much ability to abstract. Thus they often fail to see the likenesses; more often still fail to forget the differences. Such illustrations, in short,

demand a type of reasoning, a power to appreciate analogies, which is beyond the capacity of little folks. They will be interested in the objects; but they will miss altogether the "lesson." The symbolic use of objects in teaching children, common as it is, is of very dubious value.

Verbal Symbolism with Little Children.—Many of the figures of speech used in children's songs are open to the same objection. We talk and sing about things that are familiar to the little child. We are able to think of these things as symbols of moral and spiritual realities. We assume, therefore, that the little child, too, appreciates their significance and makes the application. And we are easily misled because of the little child's genuine enjoyment of the songs and stories in which such "verbal symbolism" is used, even when he is utterly missing the meaning that the symbols have for us. The little child is imaginative. But even in his imagination he is literal-minded. In his play one *thing* easily becomes another *thing,* but never a symbol for some moral or spiritual abstraction. The power to use analogy and figures of speech comes later—in youth and adult life. "Fields of sin" is a phrase full of meaning to the adult; but one five-year-old in Sunday school

persistently sang "Bring them in from the fields of hay"; he thought and understood the words only in terms of his actual concrete experience. "But I'm not a lamb" said a four-year-old, when they told him that Jesus was the Good Shepherd and little children were his lambs. "Little candles" that "brighten corners" will interest little children, and they will love to sing about them. That they really understand the analogy may be doubted. Try it out and see for yourself; when you do, make sure that their understanding goes beyond mere words of explanation that have been given them. In other words, assure yourself that the "candle" has really helped them to understand the lesson of helpfulness and cheerfulness.

II. Illustration by Verbal Example

Another type of illustration is that in which some specific case is used as an example of a proposition that has been stated in general terms. The finest instance of this kind of illustration is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Here Jesus does not formulate any general definition at all. "Who is my neighbor?" asks the lawyer. And Jesus tells him a story; gives him a specific case, an example,

an illustration. This very paragraph started with a general statement as to "another type of illustration"; and then proceeds to illustrate the general proposition by the citing of examples. "Great men are always sincere": that is a general proposition. And then: "for example:" and I mention the names of men I consider great and who are characterized by an evident sincerity of purpose and action. Whenever we say "for example," or "for instance," or "as a case in point," or "by way of illustration," we are using illustrations of this second kind; concrete and specific cases which serve to make clear a generality.

III. Illustration by Comparison

A third kind of illustration has already been commented on in connection with the use of objects; that kind of illustration which seeks to make clear some moral and spiritual truth by means of comparison with material things. This is illustration by comparison or analogy. While it has little if any value with little children, it is one of the most helpful ways of making truth vivid and real to older folk. We are using this method whenever we say, in the effort to make something else clear: this is like

some other thing, or "it is as if"; or when we use metaphor and say "this is." The Bible, especially the teaching of Jesus, furnishes abundant illustration of this method of making truth clear. Turn to the first psalm; to any of the parables; to the twenty-third psalm. Recall Jesus's words: "I am the way"; "I am the Good Shepherd"; "I am the vine, ye are the branches"; "ye are the salt of the earth"; note the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians with its "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." And illustrations might be multiplied. No device the teacher can use will be more helpful in making spiritual truth real and vital than this method of presenting it in terms of the every-day experience of his pupils.

IV. What Is a Good Illustration?

The Purpose of Illustrations.—What is a good illustration? Before answering this question let us ask first, What is an illustration for? Perhaps it seems to tell us nothing when we say that the purpose of an illustration is to illustrate. And yet many illustrations fail simply because they do not illustrate. To illustrate means to shed light upon, to illuminate, to make clear. Any illustration is a good illustration when it really helps to make some-

thing else clear; an illustration is a poor one in so far as it fails to make clear—fails really to illustrate.

Must Deal with The Familiar.—With the purpose of illustrations in mind, then, we may suggest certain dangers to be avoided. There is first the danger of using as an illustration something that is less familiar than the thing to be illustrated. We cannot really illustrate—make clear—the unfamiliar by something more unfamiliar still. Many of the figures of the Bible can give us their spiritual lesson only after the customs to which they refer have been explained: new wine in old bottles, for example; or the lost coin; or the light under a bushel; or the story of the wise and foolish virgins or of the marriage feast. The life of the Oriental shepherd must be known before the beauty of the symbolism can have much meaning. The rock in a weary land can mean little to one who knows nothing of desert countries. Even the thought of God as Father may fail in its appeal to the boy who knows nothing of a father's love in the home.

Two instances may be quoted from the little book of Patterson Dubois on *The Point of Contact in Teaching:*

"I remember once hearing an address to children based upon the text, 'The little foxes that spoilt the vines.' These little foxes were our small vices or weaknesses. Why did the speaker choose such a point of departure? I suppose 'the little foxes' had a simple, childlike sound about it to him, and seemed as though it would be easily a point of interest to little children. Perhaps it was, in so far as it roused their curiosity. Whatever the children got out of the address, they got in spite of, rather than because of, the point of departure, which was not a point of contact with common experience. To very few children does a fox exist in more than name, if that; and the propensity of foxes for spoiling vines is one which they could not appreciate unless they had lived in a country where they had actually seen this kind of destruction wrought, or heard it talked about until it became a familiar fact."[1]

"The distinguished Orientalist, Canon Tristram, says: "One Sunday in Ceylon I was addressing, through an interpreter, a large congregation of native Christians, and unfortunately chose the subject of the good shepherd. My interpreter told me afterward that not one of my hearers had ever seen a sheep, or knew what it was. 'How then did you explain what I said?' I asked. 'Oh!' he replied, 'turned it into a buffalo that had lost its calf, and went into the jungle to find it.'"[2]

Weigle in *The Pupil and the Teacher* quotes this:

I once heard a preacher explain hope to a number of children thus: "Now I will explain hope, so all these lit-

[1] Pp. 85f.
[2] Pp. 91-92.

tle girls can go home and tell their mothers what hope is. Now, children, you know that this beautiful stream of water that runs behind this meeting-house is composed of two elements, oxygen and hydrogen; so hope is composed of desire and expectation." And on he went.[8]

Must Not Be Incongruous.—Some illustrations fail because they are incongruous and inharmonious. Comparing human beings to barnyard chickens, the men to the roosters who do the crowing and the women to the hens who cackle and tend the brood, may be amusing; it is doubtful if it leaves any very deep moral and spiritual lesson. It is questionable whether it helps much to compare prayer to radio communication. Vividly realistic descriptions of prize fights or football contests may help to impress moral and spiritual truths; but it is easy for them to become objectionable.

Must Not Be Too Interesting.—And strangely enough an illustration may be so interesting that it fails of its purpose. Whenever interest is so absorbed by the illustration itself that the lesson is missed the illustration ceases to be an illustration. A speaker in Sunday school once told the story of a frog jumping out of a well, slipping back just so much after each jump. He challenged the members

[8] P. 158.

of the Sunday school to say how long it would take the frog to get out. His hearers were intensely interested. He told the story vividly and measured off the distances on his cane which he held up before the crowd. But at least one of his hearers has never yet seen the point. The illustration failed, for him at least, to illustrate anything.

Whenever our pupils remember the story we tell or the objects we exhibit or the word-picture we paint and fail to get or to remember the meaning *for them* of what we are trying to teach, our illustration, for one reason or another, fails of its purpose.

What we need to bear in mind in using illustrations, then, is always that their purpose is to make something else clear. They are not to be used for their own sake, but as means to an end. Whenever they deal with unfamiliar things, whenever they distract by being too interesting or annoy by incongruity, whatever else they may be they are not good illustrations—often are not illustrations at all.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is first-hand experience the best way to learn about anything?
2. What is the purpose of an illustration?

3. In what ways may an illustration fail of its purpose?

4. Mention some characteristics of a good illustration.

5. Can you give an illustration of the helpful use of maps and pictures and the blackboard? Would your teaching be better if you used such helps more?

6. Explain the difference between the use of objects as "things in themselves" and as "symbols."

7. Give instances of the use of each of the different types of illustrations mentioned in the chapter.

8. From what sources would you expect to get the most effective illustrations for use with your pupils?

9. Are there illustrations in this chapter that do not serve their purpose? Or elsewhere in the book? If you find such illustrations, explain why they fail.

CHAPTER VII

METHODS OF THE CLASS HOUR: HANDWORK AND DRAMATIZATION

I. Some Spontaneous Interests of Childhood

A visitor in a certain home, when the meal was announced, was escorted into the dining room by the six-year-old son of the house and proudly led to a certain special chair on which had been pasted with great care various Christmas seals and little pictures cut from magazines. The decoration of the guest's chair was the child's way of honoring him. In this particular home no magazine in which colored advertisements appear is safe for very long from the eager scissors of this first grader or his little brother. Cutting out pictures and pasting them in a scrapbook—or, if the book is not available, on walls or furniture—are fascinating occupations.

A grandmother recently said during a visit to a much-loved little grandson: "Son, I wish you'd be yourself just a little while. You've been something else ever since I came. You've been David and Strongheart and George Washington and an

Indian chief and Pegasus and Buffalo Bill and lots of other things that I can't remember. Now I'd like to talk to just you for a little while."

A four-year-old was recently heard at his toy telephone. "No, no, I won't tum," he was shouting vigorously. "To whom are you talking, Son?" he was asked. "I'm David," he promptly replied. "That was Saul talking to me. He wanted me to 'tum around there, but I won't go. He's a bad man."

"Daddy, don't you want me to tell you the story Mother read to me this afternoon?" And Daddy is in for a long and circumstantial retelling of the fascinating tale. "Daddy, won't you show me how to make a bow and arrow?" "Daddy, won't you buy me a knife? I need it to make an airplane."

These are spontaneous expressions of the life and interests of children of beginner and primary age. As the child grows older these same interests persist and develop. You can parallel and match them many times over out of your own experience with children in the home. Did you yourself as boy or girl like to dress up and play grown-up, or king and queen, or fairy? Did you like to give shows? Did you like to make things—sleds and wagons and

kites and dams and playhouses? And scrap-books? Did you like to cut out paper-dolls? And did you like to draw and paint? And keep a diary? Watch the boys and girls whom you have a chance to see in their spontaneous play; and in the things they love to do you find the clue to the methods that we can most successfully use—the type of appeal that will be most effective—in our work as Sunday school teachers.

Just a little bit of such observation will show at least this much: First, boys and girls are active, not passive, creatures. It is not natural for them to sit still and do nothing. Second, they like not only to do things but to make things. Third, they like to dramatize. This is not a formidable word. It simply means that little children like to play that they *are* the characters, human, animal, or fairy, that they have heard about. The younger children do this spontaneously, with no elaborate plan or paraphernalia, shifting rapidly from one rôle to another. As they grow older there is more of plan and organization, and sometimes "shows" are put on by groups, with costumes prepared, rôles rehearsed in advance, and patient relatives and friends invited to buy tickets.

II. Using These Interests in the Sunday School

Now, if we agree that the Sunday school must appeal to the natural interests of child life, this much follows: the Sunday school must give its pupils something to *do*. It cannot expect them just to "be quiet and pay attention." More than this, it must give them a chance to *make* something. And it must give them a chance to dramatize—to *be*, in imagination, the characters with which the Sunday school lessons acquaint them.

It is in the child's spontaneous interest in doing, in making things, and in dramatizing, that we find our first reason, then, for including these forms of activity in our teaching methods. They are effective methods of enlisting interest. And interest, we have seen, is indispensable to learning.

III. Learning Through Activity

But we may go further. Some one has said, "A little child will probably forget what he hears; he may forget what he has seen; he will not forget what he has done." If this be true, it follows that we must think of learning not simply as a process

of listening and looking but primarily as a process of *doing*. Good teaching is teaching that furnishes opportunity for *doing* on the part of the pupils.

Handwork.—Handwork is one of the forms of doing with which most Sunday school teachers are familiar today. Cutting out and pasting pictures, coloring of outlines, modelling in clay and sand, paper-tearing, drawing of maps or filling in map outlines, are types of handwork. The types of work that can be expected will vary, of course, with the age of the children; and time and expense are items that have to be carefully considered. But elaborate or expensive materials are not necessary. And the children themselves will find the time for these activities if they are really the kind that interest them.

The important thing is that this kind of work should really give the pupils a chance to carry out their own ideas. The aim of the work is not artistic training or skill—though of course careless or slovenly work should not be allowed. The work is not being done in order that the class or school may make a creditable "exhibit." The purpose of the work should never be lost sight of: that is, the provision of opportunity for the pupils to learn through doing. The pupil must express his own

ideas in his handwork. The work itself is not the object. It is the effect of the work on the pupil. The process is more important than the product. If the pupil simply does in a mechanical way exactly what the teacher tells him to, all the value is lost. Still worse is it for the teacher or parent to do the work for the child in order that the class may make a good showing. Let the child do his own work, embody his own ideas, produce his own creations in color or clay or sand, select his own pictures for coloring or pasting. In so doing he is having opportunity to think—and this is the most valuable part of the learning.

Notebook Work.—The same principles will apply to the notebook work of older pupils. If answers to questions in the notebook are dictated to the pupil, or if the stories the pupil is expected to write are written for him, the whole process is not only useless but hurtful, educationally. The notebook is a means, not an end. If the teacher is more concerned that his class should be able to show a neat and orderly set of notebooks than that they should have the training that comes from doing the work on the notebooks themselves, he is defeating the ultimate purpose of the activity.

Retelling the Story.—We do not need to think of handwork as the only form of doing for which the Sunday school teacher may provide opportunity. The child not only likes to make things. He likes to tell things. For him to tell over again a story that he has heard and in which he has been interested is just as much a matter of doing as for him to make something with his hands. The mistake that many teachers make, however, is that of allowing the retelling of the story on the part of the pupils to become an artificial and formal sort of procedure. Just answering questions or just telling what last Sunday's lesson was about is apt to be an uninteresting business. But telling the story to a member of the class who didn't hear it last Sunday, or telling it to all the class who have voted that they would like to hear it again, is thrilling. Informal conversation about the story is a method that is beset with difficulties, but a method that a skillful teacher may use to advantage in securing real expression on the part of the pupils themselves. With older boys and girls and with young people and adults there is increasing need for free and informal discussion; and such discussion is as truly learning by activity as are the handwork and notebook work of the chil-

dren. But these methods of teaching are discussed in another chapter.

Dramatization.—Retelling the story by playing it —dramatization—is another method of pupil activity that is suggested by the child's natural activities and that has proved useful. This may range all the way from simple, informal games of the little fellows to elaborate and highly organized pageants. The value of pageantry, however, is found in rather a different realm from that of the more simple dramatizations of a class or department. As an educational method the greatest value of dramatic retelling, or representation, of a story, will be found in those forms which allow for the greatest originality and spontaneity of those who take part. The few minutes in which the child assumes the rôle of one of the Bible characters and acts the part as he conceives it, will be worth much more than participation, in formal fashion, in the most artistic and elaborate pageant. The dramatization which a class works out for itself, with the teacher coöperating but not dictating or dominating, will contribute vastly more to their understanding of the characters and events and to their own development than the memorization of "parts" prescribed

for them in some elaborately costumed and sumptuously staged pageant. Dramatization as a method in the Sunday school class does not concern itself primarily, if at all, with the effect to be made upon an audience. The little child needs to be protected against self-consciousness and the shyness, or its opposite, posing for effect, that are developed by being "shown off." For them the only motive necessary is the love of playing—of assuming rôles. For older boys and girls the opportunity to prepare a little drama for an audience of other members of the school may be attractive and furnish a genuine social motive. But in either case the educational value lies in the thinking and the work that are involved in the dramatizing process. The aim, as in the case of the handwork, is not artistic perfection but self-expression. Again, the process is more important than the product. A mechanical process cannot be educative.[1]

[1] Stories suitable for dramatization will readily suggest themselves to the teacher: Ruth and Naomi, David and Goliath, Joseph and his brothers, Daniel in the Lion's Den, the Good Samaritan, the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Some of the books mentioned in the Suggestions for Further Reading and Study will provide help in planning for the dramatization of the great stories of the Bible, whether in simple fashion or in the more elaborate form of the pageant.

IV. The Values of Activity

Uses Natural Impulses.—In what has been said thus far some of the values of these various kinds of activity have already been suggested. Handwork of various sorts, retelling the story and talking it over in informal fashion, simple, spontaneous dramatizations, all have their place as teaching methods. If we attempt to summarize the reasons for their value and effectiveness we will think first of what has already been said: when used in such a way as really to give the child an opportunity to think and do for himself, they are *interesting* to him. That, in itself, is no small reason for their use. Because they are interesting they keep him busy. He will be busy, anyway. The point is, of course, that we are *using* his natural disposition to activity rather than having to fight against it. Nothing is more typical of childhood, or more trying sometimes, than the boundless energy and ceaseless activity of our youngsters. The wise teacher uses this activity and energy, directs it, controls it, instead of trying to suppress it. Rightly directed, it serves a real educational purpose. Opposed, it may turn to something destructive or mischievous. But let it be em-

phasized: just keeping boys and girls out of mischief is not the purpose of these various forms of activity. They should never be thought of as, or allowed to degenerate into, mere "busy work." They are not intended to serve a merely negative purpose. Their value should be positive. They should contribute to the development of insight and understanding and character and life in our pupils.

Demands Thinking.—And how do they help to do this? Not only do they challenge interest and enlist activity. They demand, if rightly used, the rethinking and so the clarifying of ideas. The little child who plays that he is David must first decide for himself how David would act and what David would say. The group that dramatizes a Bible story must familiarize itself with Bible characters and Bible customs and Bible scenes. To select a picture or to color a picture properly or to model the walls of Jericho or the house through whose roof the palsied man was let down, demands exactness of knowledge and some real thinking even on the part of the little tot. Before the child can express his thoughts with blocks or with crayons or in his notebook, before he can retell or act a story, he must

clarify and organize his ideas and know exactly what he is about.

Deepens Impressions.—And as he expresses these ideas which he has been helped to clarify and organize, he reimpresses them upon his own mind. And he gets them now, not only *again,* but also through a different sense channel; not only through eye and ear but also through muscle. And they are more interesting to him because they are now his—worked over in his own mind and expressed in his own way. And because of all this—this re-thinking, this repetition, this variety, this increased interest—this active attitude toward them—they are more permanently and indelibly his and more intimately and vitally a part of him than they could possibly have been if he had acquired them through a purely passive process.

V. Limitations of Handwork and Dramatization

But all this, if we consider it carefully, suggests a very serious limitation of the value of activity of the sort which we have been discussing in this chapter. And this limitation is one that is not always clearly recognized. What is our real aim as Sunday

school teachers? Not knowledge on the part of our pupils; not ideas only; but character, ideals—ideals that function in living. "No impression without expression," we say. "Learn by doing." What is it that we want our pupils to learn? What is it that we want them to express? We want them to learn not facts, and dates, and names, and events—not these things primarily. And we are not chiefly concerned that what they express shall be knowledge of these things. What we are most concerned about is that their lives shall show forth in unselfish service, in self-forgetfulness, in reverence, in purity, in courage, in thoughtfulness, the results of our teaching. It is these things that we wish "expressed"; it is such ways of living that we are concerned shall be learned by doing.

Not Really Expressive Activities.—As ways of making effective impressions, then, our handwork and dramatization and notebook work and the like are valuable. But as a means of expression of the lessons we are most concerned to teach; as methods of learning what we wish our pupils more than all else to learn, they do not measure up to the true conception of the familiar maxims. We cannot think that a boy really expresses the impulse that

has been aroused by the story of the Good Samaritan when he is given a chance to draw a picture of the inn to which the wounded man was taken, or even when he acts the part of the unselfish wayfarer in a dramatization. No. Illustrating or dramatizing the story will help to make it more vivid, to deepen the impression it makes, to arouse the impulse to go and do likewise more strongly. But that impulse can express itself only when the boy has had a chance to do some unselfish, some kindly, helpful deed for some "neighbor" whose need he himself has come to realize.

Need for Programs of Service.—This means, then, that without discounting in the least the value of activity in the class-room as a means of making impressions more vivid, more permanent, more vital, we must, at the same time, recognize that we need to turn to our programs of service for those forms of activity that really furnish opportunity for expressing the impressions we seek to make, that really furnish a chance for *doing* the things that we want to have our pupils learn. Our aim is the development of Christian character and training in Christian living. Character and ability to live the Christian life will come only through practice—practice

in Christian living. Our work as teachers of religion is incomplete so long as and in so far as we fail to furnish opportunity for this practice. This we wish to emphasize; and to it we have given another chapter, where the principle involved may be made clearer and where some practical suggestions are made.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Give illustrations out of your own experience of children's love for activity, for making things, and for dramatizing.
2. What are the reasons for giving pupils a chance to *do things* in the Sunday school?
3. In what ways are children in your Sunday school given a chance to do things?
4. Why should not the teacher or parent do the work that is suggested for the pupil himself to do?
5. Why should the teacher avoid telling pupils exactly what to do?
6. What is the value of having pupils retell a story?
7. What is the value of dramatization?
8. Why is dramatization that pupils plan themselves better than taking part in a formal "play"?
9. Explain the statement that handwork and dramatization are not really expressional activities.

CHAPTER VIII

TRAINING IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

I. The World's Need

The Church and the world today greatly need, as they have always needed, active Christians. Not facts, theories, creeds; not feelings and emotions; but service, life, will save the world. We cannot leave knowledge and belief out. We would not have real religion without feeling and emotion. But we cannot stop with knowledge and belief and emotions. It is Christians who live what they know and feel; Christians who translate their creeds into service, their emotions into deeds, who will bring Christ's kingdom on earth.

II. Character and Life

We have been constantly trying to think of our task as teachers in the Sunday school in terms of character and life rather than in terms of knowledge. Imparting knowledge is a relatively easy matter. Developing character and life is a difficult and deli-

cate process. Yet we cannot rightly see our task as anything less than the development of Christian character. We cannot, of course, separate character and Christian living. Character develops through living, and, in turn, expresses itself in living. The Christian life is the outward expression of the Christ-formed character within. And that character grows and deepens and broadens and becomes stronger and more Christ-like as it is tried and tested in actual living. There can be no genuinely Christian character apart from genuinely Christian living; nor, on the other hand, can there be genuinely Christian living other than that which has its motives in a faith in Jesus and loyalty to him and to his cause.

For us, as teachers, the significant thing is that we cannot *develop* character apart from living. If we wish the outcome of our teaching to be strong Christian character in our pupils—the kind of character that manifests itself in life—we must make training in living a part of our teaching. The only way to insure the development of active Christians is through making activity a part of learning. The basis of character is habit. The basis of Christian character is the habit of Christ-like living. And the habit of Christ-like living is formed, just as any

other habit is formed, through practice; practice in choosing the Christ-like and in doing the Christ-like thing.

The Need for Choice.—Notice the word *choosing* Christ-like living is not a mechanical doing of certain things because they are ordered, and leaving off certain other things because they are forbidden. The motive for Christian living comes from within. It depends upon fellowship with Jesus, the sharing of his spirit in the inner life. It depends upon knowledge, too; knowledge of his will as revealed in his life and in his teachings; as revealed in the lives of his followers; as revealed in the needs of men. The habits that go to form Christian character are the outcome of repeated choosing and doing of the Christ-like thing. The choosing is as important as the doing. And right choices depend upon adequate knowledge and right motives.

The Need for Practice.—But we cannot leave out the doing. Character does not grow through dreaming or wishing or talking. Character grows through doing. Perhaps our emphasis is frequently in the wrong place in our Sunday school teaching. We start with facts we wish our pupils to know or with certain emotions we wish to arouse. Then we try

to find some way for expression to be given to the information acquired or the feelings stirred. Perhaps, in our thinking and planning, we ought to start with living. Perhaps we ought to look first for things to be done; inspire our pupils to choose to do these things; and guide them in the doing, supplying help from the experience of others as it is needed. The "project method," much discussed of late, seeks to do just this: to teach by enlisting pupils in worth while enterprises which will give them experience of an educationally valuable kind. To a discussion of this method Chapter X is devoted.

In any case we may insist that if our real aim is the development of character through actual practice in living we shall find ourselves more and more looking for opportunities for our pupils to do Christ-like things; we shall find ourselves thinking of learning and teaching as a process of living together. Facts and feelings will be aids to living; and we will look together for the facts that we need and enter together into the emotional experiences that stir us and enrich our lives in order that we may live more worthily.

Certainly this is true: that ability to live the Christian life comes only through practice; and that we

cannot leave opportunities for practice in Christian living out of our program of teaching in the Sunday school if our aim is really to contribute to the development of Christian character in our pupils. Our pupils are forming habits inevitably. These habits may be habits of helpfulness, and unselfishness, and thoughtfulness, and gentleness, and courage, and faithfulness to duty; habits of promptness, of loyalty, of service; or they may be the opposite. They will be the opposite, we may be sure, unless we are providing opportunities and incentives for choices that will contribute to the formation of the desirable habits.

And to avoid forming bad habits is not enough. We must be concerned to form good habits. Our aim is positive, not negative. The habit of doing nothing is as bad as the habit of doing wrong. The habit of allowing good impulses to evaporate is as great a weakness of character as the habit of yielding to unworthy impulses. Information and emotions that do not find expression in action are useless and worse. In the long run it is destructive of character to harbor lofty ideas and feelings which never find expression in conduct. The pity aroused by human suffering may be a very selfish thing if it does not

impel to service for the sufferer. The man who has a vision of what human life might be and yet who does nothing to help make his vision real is a useless and idle dreamer.

III. The Program of Service

As was suggested in our last chapter, then, the "expressional activities" in which we should be most interested are those activities that really help our pupils to carry over into life and conduct the ideas imparted, the feelings stirred, the impulses aroused. And let us not think of such activities as side issues. They ought to be central in our thinking about Sunday school teaching, not incidental. And we should think of such activities as educative in the truest sense. This point needs emphasis. It is through them that we will be able to develop a generation of Christians who think of the Christian life in terms of service. If we once realize that it is the educative value of these activities that gives them their central place in the Sunday school program we will have a principle that will help us greatly in planning them.

What are some of these activities that will contribute thus heavily to the development of Chris-

tian character and life? We may answer that wherever there is need for service, for kindness, for helpfulness, the children in the Sunday school should have the chance to do their share. Such needs and opportunities will vary in different communities. But this is certain: wherever the church is found, whatever its particular mission, there will be something important and useful for the Sunday school to do; and the Sunday school's program of service should enlist every member.

Service for Church and School.—There are, first, opportunities for service in and for the Church and Sunday school itself. Junior boys delight in being called on to help in managing the Sunday school. They eagerly welcome the chance to serve as doorkeepers, or as caretakers, distributing songbooks and programs, running errands for the superintendent, the pastor, and other officers. The Intermediates and Seniors are able and should have the chance to assume more and more responsibility for the organization and conduct of their classes and departments. Serving as class officers, planning the worship programs and the service programs, arranging for and carrying out "socials," picnics, and other class activ-

ities will furnish splendid training for the future officers and leaders of the church.

Taking part in the Sunday school service itself, studying the lesson, regular and punctual attendance —all these may genuinely express loyalty to the Sunday school and Church and thus be helpful in the development of a sense of responsibility for the organization itself that will bear fruit in later life.

Giving.—Giving in the Sunday school may be and should be thought of as a genuinely educative process. When it is so thought of it will cease to be a perfunctory process, done in mechanical fashion. It will be so planned for as to be the expression of real interest on the part of the pupils in the cause to which they give. Giving that really helps to make the cheerful givers whom God loves will be giving that is planned for some definite purpose with which the pupils themselves are concerned. It will not be selfish giving. Would not this mean that the giving in the Sunday school would be giving for others? And that, therefore, the church organization would support the Sunday school instead of expecting the contributions of the Sunday school pupils to support the school? Only so can the gifts of the Sunday school go for others.

It is not fair, and misses the whole significance of giving in the Sunday school to have the financial responsibilities of the Church loaded on this organization. And it is quite beside the point to argue that it all comes from the same source. The purpose of giving in the Sunday school is to train a generation of liberal, systematic, cheerful, givers. The givers, then, must know to what they give and why they give; and they must give because they want to give. That they should have a chance to give toward the support of the local Church of which they are a part is right, of course. But they should give as members of the Church, helping to carry forward the Church's work; and they should have a chance to understand how the money is used. Every call made upon the Sunday school for contributions should be carefully considered and fitted into a program planned with a view to its effect on the lives of the givers as well as in the light of the worthiness of the cause. Taking the "penny" that father or mother provide on Sunday morning for the little folk and dropping in a nickel or a dime perfunctorily on the part of the older pupils because it is expected are not procedures likely to develop the genuine spirit of liberality that is needed in our Church members. A per-

sonal interest in the cause to which the contribution is made is needed—whether the cause be the carrying forward of the local Church, providing help to some needy ones of the community, helping the orphans or the sick in the hospitals, or a "missionary social." And this personal interest can come only through knowledge—the more direct and first-hand, the better.

Service in the Community.—Beyond service in the local Sunday school and Church and giving to worthy causes we will wish to extend our program of service to include helpfulness to those in need in the community. Opportunities for this kind of Christian service can be found in any community by any Church. There are plenty of things to do. There are dangers to be avoided in planning such service. The danger of perfunctoriness is one. There is little contributed to the development of character by doing things just because the teacher suggests them or because they are expected. Then there is the danger of social or spiritual snobbishness. This point should be guarded most carefully, and the pupils protected against the development of an attitude of condescending and patronizing superiority in their service for the unfortunate and the needy. The spirit of

joyous sharing with others of God's children is very different from the bestowal of charity to those of another "class."

Serving the World: Missionary Education.—From the community the program will extend to the world, and there will be things to do for God's children in other lands. Here again knowledge and genuine interest are an essential part of the service, if it is to aid in the cultivation of permanent Christian attitudes. The missionary "special," Christmas boxes, the gifts of money, must be the expression of genuine and intelligent interest in the lives of those to whom they go. And here, too, the attitude of being the favored ones of earth helping the "poor benighted heathen" is one that should not be allowed to develop. God's children must work together to bring his kingdom on earth. The kingdom needs what the people of India and China and Japan can bring to it as truly as the people in those lands need to know about Jesus. The story of missions is as much the story of the heroism and devotion of the people to whom we send as it is of the giving of the Church at home or the faith and courage of those who go. We gain little for the cause of missions in the future if we allow wrong ideas of the people to whom we send to

become established in the minds of our Sunday school pupils. Those missionaries serve best the people in foreign lands who have come most to love and admire them. Love and admiration are better missionary motives than condescension and pity.

"In hearts too young for enmity
There lies the way to make men free;
When children's friendships are world wide
New ages will be glorified.
Let child love child, and strife will cease;
Disarm the hearts, for that is peace."

IV. Guiding Principles

In planning a program of service activities for a Sunday school there should be certain guiding principles to determine its details.

Provision for Initiative of Pupils.—In the first place, always there should be borne in mind what we have already emphasized; as much provision as possible should be made for initiative on the part of the pupils themselves. According to their ability they should have a chance to plan the program, to select its objects, to determine details. Only thus will the highest educative value be realized, the greatest contribution to the development of Christian character be made.

Program Must Be Unified.—Second, the program must be a unified one. That is, the activities of any one class or department should fit into a program made for the whole school. Too many different enterprises, too many sporadic demands, too many unexpected calls from all sorts of sources, will distract and disorganize and will make impossible the controlling influence of the character-education ideal.

Program Must Be Graded.—In the third place, the program must be graded. The enterprises and the activities must be suited to the interests and the capacities of the different age-groups. There are many enterprises, of course, in which all classes of the Sunday school may take part in different ways. But there are many other kinds of helpful service best adapted to particular groups and classes. Detailed suggestions as to various kinds of service programs can be had from the different departmental superintendents of the General Sunday School Board of the denomination.

Need for Week-Day Activities.—The planning and carrying out of a service program for the Sunday school means that we cannot think of our work as confined to the school hour on Sunday morning. Much of the most important part of our teaching,

when we think of teaching as developing character and training in living, will be done in mid-week conferences and socials and through deeds of helpfulness and service between Sundays.

V. The Test of Everyday Living

And this must be said finally. After all, the real test of any one's religion is not found in the faithfulness with which he contributes to or takes part in the Church's program of service. The real test is found in his everyday living—in the home, the store, the shop, the schoolroom, on the street. Character shows itself most truly in our relationships with those we meet and deal with every day; in the way in which we meet the seemingly trivial and unimportant demands and perplexities and trials. Thoughtfulness, unselfishness, poise, sweetness of temper, gentleness in the round of daily duties are just as important and fundamental as heroism in a great crisis or faithfulness in the carrying out of duties that we think of as definitely "religious."

So, too, the real test of our teaching is found in the daily living of our pupils. We want them to be loyal to the Church and ready and eager to work for it. We want them to find joy in helping by gifts and

service those who are in need. We want them to be missionary in spirit. And no less, we want their daily living to be more and more Christ-like in its spirit and in its acts. To this test we must continually bring our teaching: are our pupils, because of our work with them, putting into practice day by day, the spirit of Jesus about whom we would teach them?

The teacher cannot be constantly with his pupils. There are many influences that tend to undo all that the Sunday school tries to do. There is, then, all the more reason why our teaching should be as vitally related as possible to the daily lives of our pupils. And if it is to be so related the teacher must know as much in detail as possible what the problems in these lives are. The teacher may also seek to keep parents informed as to the work the Sunday school is trying to do and enlist the help of the parents in providing opportunities for real "application" of the Sunday school "lesson."

That teacher will succeed best who is most concerned with practice as well as with preaching. That teacher is most accurately gauging the results of his work who is looking beyond the knowledge he succeeds in imparting; who is looking to the *lives* of his

pupils; and who is trying to teach in such a way, on Sunday and through his own life all during the week, that the teaching "carries over" and thus contributes to growth in Christian character and to skill in Christian living.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Try to state for yourself the relationship between character and living.
2. Why should the Sunday school provide opportunities for practice in Christian living?
3. "To avoid forming bad habits is not enough." Explain.
4. Suggest "things to do" that would give training in Christian living to the class you know best.
5. How might the giving in your Sunday school be made more helpful in the development of character?
6. State in your own words some of the dangers to be avoided in planning for "social service" and missionary education.
7. State and explain briefly the "guiding principles" suggested for the program of service activities.
8. Does your Sunday school have a program of service activities? If so, does it conform to the principles suggested? If it does not have such a program, what can you do to build one?
9. "The real test of our teaching is found in the daily living of our pupils." Do you agree?
10. Are you willing to measure your teaching by this test?

CHAPTER IX

PLANNING FOR THE CLASS HOUR

I. The Need for Planning

Whatever may be true of public speaking, there is no such thing as good extempore teaching. A successful class hour means careful preparation. There will be a plan, worked out in such detail that the teacher will know exactly what he hopes to accomplish during this particular class hour, exactly what materials will be used, what methods will be followed. In this chapter let us think of the teacher getting ready to meet his class on Sunday morning.

II. When Begin?

Lessons Must Be Assigned in Advance.—When should the teacher begin to prepare for a particular class period? This is an interesting question to ask a group of teachers. Leaving out of account the continuous preparation of a general sort that we wish to consider later, when should the lesson for a particular meeting of the class first have the teacher's attention? Few teachers, if any, now fail to realize

that preparation cannot wait until the day before or the morning on which the lesson is to be taught. Many teachers suggest the Sunday afternoon or evening preceding. But one simple consideration will suggest that this is not soon enough. The lesson for one Sunday must be assigned the preceding Sunday. And if our assignments are to be made with the care and effectiveness in securing study that they deserve, they must be planned for in advance. They must be a part of the lesson plan. This means that at least two weeks before a lesson is to be taught the teacher should begin to work out his plan for its teaching, so that by the Sunday preceding he may be able to make his assignments with definite relation to the plan he expects to follow.

Lessons Must Be Part of a Course.—But even this is not soon enough to begin the preparation, at least in a general way. Recent numbers of the *Sunday School Magazine,* a teacher's periodical, have carried this statement at the head of a page under the caption, "Our Lesson Schedule": "Of late more than one Sunday school worker has written to the editor suggesting that the Lesson Schedule be printed in the Magazine for two or three months in advance. This is a favorable omen. It indicates that Sunday school

teachers are growing more and more alive to the great importance of their work and are giving themselves to serious study of lesson material. It also indicates a growing desire to study these lessons as we prepare them—that is, by courses."

"By courses." What does that mean? It means that our lessons do not stand apart from one another as independent units. The International Graded Lessons, and, as well, the International Group Uniform Lessons, represent definite courses of study. Each lesson is related to those preceding and those following in such a way as to help develop a theme which runs through the whole series. We cannot teach one lesson apart from our teaching of those before and after it. This means, then, that we really begin the preparation for a particular class hour when we familiarize ourselves, at the start of a new course, with the general theme and purpose of that course, the materials provided in it, and the relationship of the successive single lessons to the course as a whole.

III. How Proceed?

The Subject of the Lesson.—The first step in preparation for the class hour is the selection of the

"subject of the lesson." Ideally the teacher would start with the thought of his particular group and its needs, and with *his class* in mind would choose the subject for the lesson to be taught. But few teachers have time or the resources or the ability to make their own lesson courses. So we find ourselves using the courses that are provided for us in our Sunday school literature. It is necessary for the teacher to know that these courses *are* planned, whether in the "Graded Series" or in the "Improved Uniform," to meet the needs and suit the capacities of different age-groups. The pupil, in so far as is possible, is put at the center in the planning of our lesson courses. That is the significance of the different topics in the lesson schedule of the Improved Uniform Lessons. Notice, for example, the lesson for September 7, 1924. The story of the healing of the nobleman's son, in John 4: 46-54, is made the basis of the lessons for all groups above the Junior. For Young People and Adults the theme of the lesson is "What Should We Expect From Faith?" For Seniors and Intermediates: "Belief in Jesus: What It Has Done and Will Do." Two different topics are based on the same Bible passage. Such a plan is not ideal, but it represents the effort to suit the material chosen to

the interest and abilities of pupils of different ages. The closely graded lessons are able to do this much more thoroughly; and lesson courses are being constantly improved at just this point: their suitability, in message and material, to the pupils who are to learn through them.

Sometimes it may seem advisable, for a particular purpose or to meet some special situation, for the teacher to depart altogether from the regular lesson series and plan his own lesson for his own class. But just a word of caution: this should not be made an excuse for doing something easier than would be demanded from the regular lesson. The teacher should be sure of his judgment and of the need before abandoning a carefully planned curriculum for something of his own devising.

The Aim of the Lesson.—With the lesson subject and the general material on which the lesson is to be based provided, the teacher's first thought should be of the relationship of that lesson to his pupils' lives. As he makes a preliminary survey of the lesson material he should be asking: "What can this bring to my pupils that will meet some real need of their lives?" This will lead to the formulation of the aim of the lesson.

Some Examples.—Let us turn to some of the suggestive lesson plans provided in the *Sunday School Magazine.* The lesson for July 15, 1923, was on Simon Peter—one of a series on Great Men and Women of the Bible. For Young People and Adults the subject of the lesson was "Peter's Strength and Weakness." For Intermediates and Seniors the wording of the subject emphasizes deeds, not abstract traits of character: "Peter's Failures and Successes." Professor Crawford, who prepared the lesson plan for Young People and Adults, first gives a brief summary of the character of Peter, suggesting that this study "brings to our attention a type which challenges our interest, compels our respect, impels our admiration, draws heavily upon our sympathy, bespeaks our affection, merits our esteem, wins our love." The lesson is, he says, "a study of growth in grace, of transformation of character. A fisher of fishes becomes a fisher of men. Instability, impulsiveness, timidity, solidify into the strength and solidness of a rock." Thus approaching the problem, he formulates the "Aim of the Lesson":

> In studying such a character, in dealing with a transformation so profound, in considering a change so marvelous, the question naturally arises, How is all of this to

be explained? The answer to this question suggests an aim for this lesson study. This aim may be to show how Peter's whole life and viewpoint came gradually to be changed, and how this change came about through the influence of Jesus. The aim might be, *To show how Jesus transforms a life.*[1]

For the Intermediates and Seniors Miss Dorothy Childs proposes this aim: "To inspire pupils with the conviction that those who have stumbled may rise and that the Master's love never fails." She then comments:

> Experience, sorely needed by young people, may be furnished not alone by the hard blows of contact with the world, but also by a knowledge of other men's careers. Peter may be made a biographical study from which the awakening boy or girl draws not so much a connected story as a vivid impression of the whole that illuminates all his life. The difficult thing is to bring Peter's experiences home to your pupils in terms of their own experiences and problems.[2]

For the Pupil: Knowledge, Feeling, Conduct.—Notice how, in the comment just quoted, the primary thought is of the pupil and his needs. In the formulation of the aim of the lesson the pupils come first: What do I want this lesson to do for them? The

[1] *Sunday School Magazine,* July, 1923, p. 444.
[2] *Ibid.,* July, 1923, p. 446.

aim of a particular lesson should, of course, be related to the general aim of the course of which this lesson is a part. Sometimes the primary aim of a particular lesson will be to furnish useful knowledge that will deepen understanding and insight and help in the realization of the purpose of the course as a whole. Sometimes the primary aim will be the arousing of certain definite feelings or attitudes. Sometimes the lesson will be definitely planned to prepare for certain service activities of the class or school. At any rate, these are the three elements that will enter, in varying proportions, into the teacher's formulation of the aim of the lesson:

(1) Useful knowledge.
(2) Right feelings and attitudes.
(3) Right conduct.

The teacher should formulate his own aim. No one who prepares the suggestive lesson plans for teacher's periodicals would for a moment wish to do more than help the teacher determine what the lesson is to do for his own class. Decide what *your* class needs, what *your* class can get, from this lesson. Let *your* class determine your purpose in the teaching of the lesson.

The Teacher's Study of the Lesson.—The aim of the lesson determined, the teacher will wish next to make careful study of all the available helps with this aim in mind. The teacher will need to prepare a great deal more material than he is to use. Only so can he teach with sureness and confidence. Professor Palmer, one of America's great teachers, in an admirable little book on *The Ideal Teacher,* speaks of not daring to get too close to the edge of his knowledge for fear he will fall off. For lecture or discussion the broader the background of special as well as general preparation the teacher can secure, the freer will he be from such uneasiness as Professor Palmer suggests. Use all the time and all the resources at your command.

Selection and Elimination.—But there must be careful selection and elimination. Not all the material provided even in the lesson helps can possibly be used by any one teacher. The lesson hour must not be "cluttered up." Select that material which most definitely will help in the realization of the aim that has been set. Be content to leave out material that does not contribute to this aim, however striking it may be or however useful it might be in other connections.

IV. The Teaching Plan

The Main Divisions.—With this process of selection the teacher has definitely begun the making of the teaching plan. This continues with the organization and arrangement of the material in just the way that the teacher expects to use it. There is no one best form for a lesson plan. In general, though, we may say that any lesson, as perhaps anything else, falls into three parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end. And each of these parts has its own importance. An ineffective beginning will lose the pupil's attention at the start, perhaps irrevocably. At the end the teacher usually wishes to sum up and clinch the whole message of the lesson hour; the impressions made at the end are most apt to endure and the lesson that runs out to an ineffective conclusion is apt to be an ineffective lesson as a whole. But to emphasize the importance of the beginning and the end is not to minimize the importance of the "middle." It is there that, after all, the real teaching is done, following up an effective beginning and preparing the way for an impressive close. The striking beginning that is not followed up serves no complete purpose. The conclusion that is not the

outgrowth of the development of the lesson rests on nothing. No part of the plan should be overemphasized at the expense of any other part.

Our lesson plans, then, will fall at least into these divisions:

1. The Lesson Aim, the formulation of which we have already discussed.
2. The Introduction or Approach to the Lesson.
3. The Development of the Lesson.
4. The Conclusion of the Lesson.

And at some point in the lesson hour will come:

5. The Assignment of the Next Lesson.

The Introduction.—There is no one way to begin effectively. Sometimes it is well to plunge right in with some pointed question dealing with the heart of the lesson, and from this to work backward and forward in the development. A favorite method is to start with a story or illustration that has definite relation to something in the pupil's own life. This should not be a mere trick. This kind of introduction should really have some connection with what follows. A boy of twelve commented on one teacher: "Oh, pshaw! He just tells us a story about baseball or something and then tries to make us think it has something to do with the lesson." Such a me-

chanical way of "getting the point of contact" is teaching so unskillful that the pupil himself feels its artificiality.

In Miss Dorothy Childs' admirable lesson plan already referred to the suggestion is made for the lesson on Peter's Failures and Successes: "Begin the lesson by proposing a problem. If you can think of some incident with a local, or possibly personal, application, so much the better. (Best of all is it to have a pupil tell it, but this should be prearranged with some pupil in particular.) Pick out a boy or girl who is not afraid to talk, and ask something like this: 'Mary (or John), suppose a girl (or a boy) wants something very badly, say to go to some big university that requires entrance examinations. He works hard to prepare. Then, when the questions are presented to him, he can't answer half. Maybe he is nervous, or he hasn't studied in the right way. At any rate he fails. *What ought he to do?* What would be the heroic response to such a situation?' Let them talk over the matter, putting in a question now and then, to assist clear thinking, until they see that to remain content with failure is weakness, while to try again in spite of discouragement is

heroism. Ask them what would be lost by the former or gained by the latter." Peter is then introduced as a "man who tried again." [3]

Sometimes, if the last lesson has been well taught and has been effective, the approach to the new lesson may well be made through a brief review of the old. Here again, the process should not be artificial. In a historical or biographical course in which pupils are really interested, some pupil could well be called on to review last Sunday's lesson for the benefit of some member of the class who was absent. Other ways of beginning will suggest themselves. Perhaps the chief requirement is that the teacher should vary the ways in which he begins the lesson, so as to avoid the listlessness that comes from knowing what to expect.

The Development of the Lesson.—Under the head of development the teacher will wish to organize the material that is to be used. This will usually involve a brief outline. For Intermediates and Seniors who are studying Peter as "a man who tried again," the lesson falls naturally into three parts, in the lesson plan we have been considering: "How Peter

[3] *Sunday School Magazine,* July, 1923, p. 446.

made mistakes, how Peter succeeded, and what we learn from Peter." [4]

The outline that Professor Crawford suggests for the teaching of the lesson on Peter's Weakness and Strength is as follows:

1. Peter the Fisherman, showing how and why, in response to the call of Jesus, he became at once a student of Jesus (Matt. 4:18, 19; Luke 5:1-10). (Have different members of the class read the references.)

2. Peter as a Student, emphasizing how, through a period of nearly three years, Jesus, through instruction, observation, trial-and-error, carefully and patiently taught Peter, as, for example, the transfiguration scene (Matt. 17:1-13); raising the daughter of James (Matt. 9:18); walking on the water (Matt. 14:22-23); the searching question (Matt. 16:13-18); washing his feet (John 13); the questions by the sea (John 21:15-17, the lesson story).

3. Peter as a Leader as in Acts 1 and 2, when unhesitatingly he assumes leadership in the new Church.

4. Peter the Preacher and Evangelist, as illustrated in Acts 3 and 4, when with passion and fervor he preaches the gospel of Jesus, the power of which he himself had learned to feel.[5]

Thus the plan provides for the presentation of the facts which will help in realizing the aim of the les-

[4] *Sunday School Magazine,* July, 1923, p. 446.

[5] *Sunday School Magazine,* July, 1923, p. 444. (The outline is slightly modified.)

son as already formulated: To show how Jesus transforms a life. But we have suggested that facts are not enough; attitudes or feelings are to be aroused and conduct motivated. Professor Crawford, therefore, does not stop with this outline of the facts. He concludes his lesson plan with these paragraphs:

Right Attitudes.—It is admiration for Peter that you want the members of your class to feel—admiration for his life as a whole. Lead them to judge Peter not so much from the standpoint of what he was, but rather because of what he became. Impress the fact that although he did at times seem slow to learn, nevertheless he did learn effectively and permanently. Though he followed afar off at the time of the trial, he followed near by after the ascension. Peter made gradual, steady, and certain progress in the school of Jesus—does Jesus ask more of any man?

Application or Conduct.—If conduct and fellowship with Jesus made an intrepid leader and an evangel of power out of a fisherman, what will not fellowship and contact with the risen Christ make out of men and women to-day? Is not the secret of Peter's life to be found in the fact that he became a willing student of Jesus? Is not that the first step in real character transformation? Have you definitely and certainly made this step? Upon one occasion Peter uttered these profoundly significant words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.) Again, from the depths of his heart, perchance overcome with emotion, Peter stammered, "Lord, thou

knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:17.) Can you speak as earnestly and sincerely?[6]

The Conclusion.—The method of concluding, as of beginning, should vary. There is no one best way. Sometimes a brief summing up; sometimes a brief discussion of something to be done, interest in which develops out of the lesson; sometimes a short prayer; sometimes an abrupt close when the climax of the lesson is reached, without any attempt to "apply it," rather letting it carry its own message; sometimes the assignment of the next lesson, especially when the next lesson grows logically and naturally out of this one.

V. Assigning the Next Lesson

There is no one time in the lesson period for the assignment of the lesson. When it is placed at the end there is sometimes the danger that it will spoil the effect of the lesson just taught. Frequently it is best to assign the next lesson at the beginning of a lesson period. Sometimes questions of importance will be raised in the course of the discussion that will anticipate the next lesson and furnish ready opportunity for the assignment.

[6] *Sunday School Magazine*, July, 1923, pp. 444-445.

But whenever it is done, it should be done with care. Allow plenty of time. Careful assignment is one of the main secrets of securing effective study on the part of the pupils. These suggestions may help:

(1) Make assignments definite. The trouble with many boys and girls is that, even where there's a will, they do not know the way. They do not know how to study. Give something definite to be done: a question or set of questions to be answered, an outline to be made, a topic to be reported on, facts to be investigated. This definiteness in the task may sometimes be helpfully supplemented by:

(2) Definite suggestions as to time and place for study. Get the pupils to agree to study at a particular time and even a particular place during the week. The time and the place will then help to suggest the study; and the pledge will be an incentive.

(3) Definiteness as to sources of help. Few of our Sunday school pupils know where to turn when they are given an assignment that amounts to more than "study the next lesson." They need to be told just what books to look into, and just where to look, and where to get the books; and usually the teacher will do well to put the books into their hands with

an offer of readiness to help in their use. This suggests then:

(4) Be always ready to help your pupils study; and let them know that you are ready. Many teachers find it a good thing to arrange for regular study periods during the week.

(5) Put responsibility upon individuals. Make your assignment not only definite but individual. Give John this question to look up, Mary this topic to report on, Alice a map to draw for the class, Albert these figures to verify or this illustration to prepare. Then be sure to call for reports on these special assignments.

(6) Enlist the coöperation of parents. Let them know what you are trying to do, what you are expecting of the pupils, and how they can help.

VI. Using the Plan

In planning for the class hour the teacher brings to a focus and applies all his resources of spiritual insight, knowledge, and teaching skill. Upon the care with which he plans will depend in large measure the success of the class hour.

And yet this final word. With the plan made, it should be mastered, so that, during the class hour, it

does not come between the teacher and the class. Here, as everywhere else, it is the pupils that count—the pupils, not the plan. Unexpected difficulties or opportunities may occur and the plan prepared in advance may break down completely. Then are the teacher's resources truly tested. And the more thorough his preparation, general and special, the more careful his planning, the readier is he to meet such emergencies and so really to teach well.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the general subject of the course of lessons you are now teaching? What is the aim of the course?

2. Why is it not enough for the teacher to study the lesson carefully? Why is a teaching plan also needed?

3. What does the need for careful assignment in advance have to do with the time for beginning preparation of a lesson?

4. In what way does the fact that a lesson is part of a course affect the teacher's plans? Illustrate.

5. Why should the teacher have a definite aim for each lesson? What should determine this aim?

6. What would you consider the purposes of the introduction?

7. Why should the teacher study more than he expects to teach?

8. What would you consider the purposes of the conclusion?

9. Should the teacher always conclude with an "application"? Explain your answer.

10. Which of the suggestions as to assigning the lesson have you tried? Which do you think worth trying with your class?

11. Study carefully some of the suggestive teaching plans in the *Sunday School Magazine* or other lesson helps in the light of the discussion of this chapter.

12. Select a lesson suited to your class and prepare a careful teaching plan.

CHAPTER X

TEACHING BY PROJECTS

I. Learning by Living

Our discussion up to this point has dealt with the problems and procedure of the teacher who, in the Sunday school, meets a class for a limited time for the development of a "lesson" which is part of a prescribed "course of study" or "curriculum." This is teaching in the Sunday school as it is ordinarily understood. To make the class hour effective in its influence on the character and lives of his pupils is the aim of every earnest teacher. To help in the discovery of those methods most likely to contribute toward this end has been the purpose of the preceding chapters.

But in connection with the discussion of "methods" there has been persistent effort to suggest some of the principles in the light of which any question as to technique must be answered. Good teaching, it has been urged, appeals to vital interests, finds motives

in the pupils' own lives, enlists pupils in wholehearted, purposeful activity, and, in consequence, affects the development of character and conduct. Interest, motive, activity, purpose: these are key words in our thinking about good teaching. In the lives of our pupils we find the measure of our success or failure.

Thus we persistently try to think of our aim as going beyond mere knowledge and including the motives and the conduct of those we teach. Learning then becomes for us the process of acquiring new motives and making them effective in new ways of living. Teaching is the control and direction of this process.

With our task so conceived, it is but natural that we should turn, not to the formal processes of the class room, but to life itself for a clue to the way learning goes on. Life itself, actual experience, is the great educator. Life continually presents to the child problems he must solve, tasks he must accomplish. These problems are real, their solution is educative, because they arise in the carrying out of the child's own purposes, in the realization of his own aims. He experiments, tries this way and that, seeks for information, draws on the experience of others for help, finds his own "ways out," acquires

new modes of living, receives new satisfactions. This is learning that makes for power, for personality, for character.

If learning be thought of in such terms as this, teaching must inevitably be conceived of as a process of controlling the child's experience in such a way as to present him with real problems and real tasks, typical of actual life situations. The teacher then guides and helps the child deal with these situations so that knowledge is acquired in response to a need felt in the child's own life, worthy purposes are realized and confirmed, satisfaction is found in new and better ways of living.

It is some such ideal as this that the project method sets for itself. It is an attempt to carry out to the full the practical implications of the principles we have tried to suggest in simple fashion in earlier chapters.

II. The Project Method

The distinctive feature of the method of teaching by projects is that it *begins* with the proposal to *do something*. Instead of starting with information that it seems desirable for pupils to have, and then seeking to get "expressed" in some way the "im-

pression" that has been made the project method makes activity, doing, primary in the learning process. A project is something to do. Pupils are enlisted in activities. Information is supplied as it is needed in the carrying forward of the activities of the group. Pupils learn to live by living.

But it will be obvious from what has been said that the project that is truly educative is not *just anything* to do. The activities in which pupils are enlisted must meet certain requirements. Some of these we may attempt to state.

1. The enterprise in which the pupils engage must be *real.* It must be typical of actual experiences in the normal life of the child if it is to help him deal with later situations.

2. The experiences into which the project leads the child must be within his capacity to understand and appreciate.

3. The enterprise must be genuinely interesting to the pupils engaging in it. Only so can it enlist whole-hearted activity.

4. The project must demand real thinking on the part of the pupils. It must, then, present problems for solution and drive them to *seek* information necessary for the carrying out of the enterprise.

5. The project must provide for initiative on the part of the pupils. It is activity, not passivity, that educates. And we must not forget that sometimes bodily activity may be accompanied by a mental passivity that is deadening. To be educative, the project itself and the details of carrying it through must be *chosen* by the pupils themselves, guided and helped, but not dictated to, by the teacher-leader of the group. This implies what, for emphasis, may be stated in other words:

6. The project must be *purposefully* entered into by the pupils. They must foresee and desire and purpose to accomplish worthy ends. Purposing and planning are more vitally educative than mere doing. It is purposeful activity that educates. Motives are no less important than deeds. Why this is done concerns us as much as what is done.

7. Usually the project should be a coöperative enterprise. Even when responsibility for certain features of the work is assigned to individuals, it is the relationship to the whole that gives the individual task its significance.

8. The project must be "socially motivated." It must have as its aim the rendering of service to

others—usually others outside the group, sometimes others in the group carrying on the enterprise. It is living with and for others for which we wish to prepare our pupils.

9. The project must be something really worth doing. Projects in Christian education must give the pupils who share in them the experience of helping in the real work of the Kingdom. "One real test is the question of the ultimate purpose and use of the product. Does it help to create more love in the world?"[1]

"Our task as educators, seeking to build Christian character, is to lead the child through a series of such experiences, or to engage in such projects, as will develop in him the attitude, knowledge, and capacity to meet coming life-situations in the spirit and way of Christ. Having made such purposes and carried them out in accordance with the Christian spirit in each project-experience, and having found the way satisfactory, he becomes increasingly better fitted to face new situations as a Christian."[2]

[1] Shaver, *The Project Principle in Religious Education*, p. 53.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

III. Some Practical Questions

Many very practical and pertinent questions will arise in the mind of any thoughtful teacher who comes to some appreciation of the ideals of project-teaching. What are good projects? How may they be discovered? What is involved in carrying through a project? Are there definite rules of procedure? How should we set about the introduction of project-teaching? What relationship has the project principle to our "courses of study"? How will the method affect our organization into departments and grades? What place, if any, in the project method have the various techniques of teaching such as have been discussed in the earlier chapters of this book? No one can, as yet, with certainty and finality answer all of these questions. Here only a suggestive word or two on each may be offered.

Curricula and Organization.—Certainly the complete carrying through of the project principle will involve radical revision of our curricula and of our conception of the purpose of curricula. Curricula will no longer consist of "collections of text-material to be digested." Rather they will attempt to provide " a series of activities on the Christian level to

insure a more complete experience" for the pupil.[3] Curricula will be flexible, leaving large scope for the exercise of initiative and choice on the part of teachers and pupils. They will be suggestive rather than prescriptive. They will seek to help the teacher in guiding pupils in the discovery of truth, in the solution of problems, in the carrying out of Christian purposes.

Our schemes of Sunday school organization, under the influence of the project principle, will become far less formal and rigid; and there will be much greater provision for the sharing by the pupils of responsibility for the carrying on of the Sunday school enterprise as a whole.

Teaching Techniques.—The techniques of teaching with which we are familiar—story-telling, discussion, questioning, illustration, drill, even the lecture—will have their place in project-teaching. And this place will be not less but more important, because these familiar methods will be used less formally and more vitally. That is to say, they will be used when they are clearly needed as an aid in the carrying out of the purposeful activities of the group. On this point Shaver is clear and emphatic:

[3] Shaver, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

"The project principle does not do away with present techniques. It rather requires the more effective and skilled use of all of them. In some cases this means a more limited use in the class period but the total use is even greater, for larger opportunity is given for extra-class use. Let no teacher seek the consolation that project-teaching excuses him from developing skill in these arts. It is no substitute for them; his ability from the project viewpoint is in proportion as he uses them wisely and well. It is rather a new way of using them for which the project calls." [4]

Finding Projects.—All that has been said in the chapter on Training in Christian Living as to the types of service activities in which pupils may be enlisted is applicable to the selection of projects. But this renewed emphasis is needed: these activities are not to be thought of as incidental to the "lesson" but as the vital and essential part of the educative process. Anything needing to be done, which the pupils of the Sunday school may be interested in helping to do, may constitute a project of a genuinely educative kind. A primary department in one Sunday school recently made scrap-books for the children in

[4] Shaver, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

a near-by hospital. The children of the department took them over and made friends with the little sufferers. Later they eagerly took advantage of every opportunity to visit the hospital and were constantly suggesting things that they might do to make the children there happy. This was a project, though the term was not used.

An adult class in the same school undertook to enlist the church one hundred per cent for the Golden Cross Society. This involved studying the work of this organization, studying the local church membership, organizing the class, and the establishment of personal contact with the members of the church. This, too, was a project, though again the term was not emphasized. A Junior class planned and carried out the Christmas program for the Sunday school. A class of young women made a Christmas visit of good cheer to the Home for Old Women. A class of Seniors set out seriously to formulate the Christian attitude toward the problems presented by their own community life. These are samples, chosen almost at random. A list of possible projects would be almost endless and almost endlessly varied. Purposing to do things the need for which is seen, to find out things the need for which is felt: this is the heart of the

project method. Almost anything may be an educative project—even "studying the lesson"—provided —and here is the essential point—the *purpose* is there: a purpose growing out of actual needs which can be met only through this particular activity.

Carrying Out Projects.—There can be no "formal steps" in a method that seeks to conform to life itself and that is, therefore, almost by definition, flexible and informal. There should, of course, be careful consideration in advance of the needs of the pupils, their interests, their capacities, their problems. There should be equally careful survey of the activities of church and community, sharing in which might give the pupils needed and helpful experience. Preparation for launching the project will demand preliminary conferences with the pupils with a view to enlisting their interest and helping them to formulate their purposes with reference to the enterprise. The group then, with the teacher as leader rather than dictator, will formulate tentative plans of action. These are the preliminary steps. From this point the procedure will be as flexible and as varied as the nature of the project demands. The teacher will guide and help but never dominate the search for needed information, the interchange of experi-

ence, the revision and execution of plans. There will be, finally, the evaluation of results by teacher and pupils. It hardly needs to be said that this evaluation will be in terms of life and character. New attitudes, new habits, new ways of living in relationship to their fellows, rather than new facts and new ideas: it is for these that the teacher must look in his pupils in measuring the results of his teaching.

Introducing Project Teaching.—Finally, let it be said, no new method can succeed if it is introduced abruptly, unintelligently, without proper preparation. Project teaching is entitled to a fair trial. This it cannot have if prejudice against it is aroused from the start by unwise and tactless advocacy of it. The method must win its way by actual demonstration of its merits. The start may be made in week-day classes, in vacation schools, in supplement to the prescribed courses of lessons already in use, or as an experiment in substitute for the prescribed course during a part of the school year. Simple projects should be selected to begin with. The most careful preparation must be made. Extravagant claims must be avoided. Results must be carefully and honestly evaluated. Patience, tact, adaptability, open-minded-

ness, sympathy, courage, and good hard work are demanded of the teacher who sets himself to help the educational forces of his church "move in the direction of teaching by enlisting the coming generation in whole-hearted, purposeful Christian activity."[5]

IV. The Importance of Principles

The project method is new. The principles which it seeks to apply are not new. It cannot be said too often or with too much emphasis that the teacher who is to use the method successfully must master the principles that govern it. To attempt its use mechanically, imitatively, blindly, is to invite failure. Further, success with project teaching demands that the teacher be original and resourceful beyond the ordinary. Otherwise "project teaching" may prove to be no better than mere "busy work" or the mechanical following out of a routine that some one else has prescribed. There is no magic in the word "project" itself. It is the spirit and the ideal that are of importance for the teacher. And the spirit and the ideal of the project method are the spirit and the ideal of all *good* teaching. "Thoughtful

[5] Shaver, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

teachers for many years have used principles which are now classified as belonging to the project method."[6] The teacher who finds motives in the pupil's own life, who appeals to vital interests, who enlists his pupils in whole-hearted, purposeful activity, whose teaching is therefore vitally influencing growth and development of mind and heart—that teacher teaches well, whether his method be called by one name or another. And the teacher whose work is mechanical and lifeless is teaching poorly, whatever be the particular formula he may be following.

The emphasis must be put upon principles rather than upon a particular technique, for failure to master principles means failure to succeed with any "method." Moreover, teachers who work with such limited resources of material and time as to make it seem impossible to undertake "projects" should not therefore feel that they cannot teach vitally and effectively. Nor should such teachers feel under any less obligation than more fortunately situated ones to strive for that dynamic and vital quality of teaching which alone makes the project or any other method effective.

[6] Minor, *Principles of Teaching Practically Applied.*

V. For Further Light

This chapter should raise more questions in the mind of the reader than it answers. Its purpose is to arouse interest in the project method of teaching and to stimulate the reader to turn to fuller, more adequate, and more concrete discussions. The best of these is the book by Shaver, from which frequent quotation has been made: "The Project Principle in Religious Education." This book will provide the teacher with a stimulating discussion of the theoretical basis of the project method; with suggestive, sympathetic treatment of the numerous practical questions that arise; with illustrative lists of projects for different age-groups; and with descriptions of actual church school projects which have been successfully carried through. In addition it will provide numerous references for further reading in the abundant periodical literature relative to the project principle.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How would you state the distinction between "expressional activities" and educational "projects"?

2. Try to formulate for yourself, as clearly as possible, the arguments that may be used in support of the project principle in religious education.

3. Compare the ideals of project teaching with the method of Jesus in the training of the twelve. (See Shaver, p. 51.)

4. State the requirements of a good project in religious education, with the reason for each one.

5. What practical difficulties would you encounter in attempting project teaching in your Sunday school?

6. To what extent is the project principle already in use, even if not under that name, in your Sunday school?

7. In what ways would our conception of curricula be modified by acceptance of the project point of view?

8. Why would organization have to become less formal under the influence of the project principle?

9. Consider the place of each of the specific class room techniques in project teaching. When would there be occasion for their use? What end would they serve?

10. Try to list some possible projects in which the Sunday school group you know best might be enlisted.

CHAPTER XI

THE TEACHER'S TASK

I. The Purpose of Our Study

We have in our study up to this point been discussing some of the practical problems that concern every teacher of a Sunday school class. Attention of the pupils in class is essential. How shall it be secured? We cannot teach effectively unless we are able to get our pupils to make preparation for the class hour. How may we get them to study? What methods should be used in the teaching period? What are the advantages and limitations and difficulties of the different methods? How may they be most effectively used? How may we train our pupils in and for Christian living?

For all of these questions we have sought to find helpful answers. Not complete or final answers, certainly; but answers that perhaps will suggest to the student-teacher the direction in which to look, the lines along which the practice that makes for perfection must proceed. Along with practical sugges-

tions we have attempted also to indicate underlying and guiding principles. Some of these are fundamental and should govern all our thinking about our work and guide all our planning for it. Most fundamental and important of all, perhaps, is the way in which we think of our task. Our conception of our purpose or aim as Sunday school teachers will have much to do with the methods we adopt and the preparation we seek for ourselves.

II. What Is Teaching?

We are teachers. And a teacher is—*one who helps some one else to learn.* A simple statement and yet one that implies much. There is no teaching unless there is learning. The teacher has not really taught unless the pupil has learned. Constantly bearing this in mind would save the new teacher much misplaced emphasis and much futile procedure. The object of our teaching: making something happen in the life of the pupil. The test of our teaching: what happens in the life of the pupil. Not how logically was my lesson planned; not how eloquently I spoke; not how clear my ideas were to myself; not how interesting I found the theme—no; rather, what did my pupils get? what new ideas did they carry away?

what new insights came to them? what fine attitudes were fostered? what new impulses to right living were aroused? what right choices were encouraged, what right habits more firmly established? The test of our teaching, as of all else in our Sunday school, is found in the life of the pupil.

III. What Is Learning?

Read over again the preceding paragraph. *The teacher is one who helps some one else to learn.* Teaching is guiding the process of learning. What, then, is learning? We say in the last paragraph "making something happen" not "in the mind" but "in the life" of the pupil. We are very much accustomed to think of learning as a process of acquiring information, of mastering facts and ideas. That is truly a part of or one kind of learning. But learning is much more than that. Through learning we are able to *do* as well as to *know.* We learn, too, to *feel* as well as to *know;* we learn to love and to hate, to reverence and to abhor. Life cannot be limited to knowing. Power to live depends upon much more than knowledge. Power to live depends upon the grip that our knowledge has upon our feelings and its ability to *move* us. The motives are

the things that count, fundamentally. *Ideas,* surcharged with feeling, become *ideals.* Ideals, determining conduct, become *motives.* The lives we live depend upon the motives that control us. Learning is learning to live. It is, then, in the truest sense, a process of forming and transforming motives, and thus of developing personality, character, the power to live.

Our task as teachers can be thought of as no less than the development of character and training in living—Christian character and Christian living. And the two are inseparable.

IV. The Aim of the Sunday School

What are Christian character and Christian living? May we not answer the question most simply by saying that what we want is the character of Jesus reproduced in the characters of our pupils, the life of Jesus reproduced in the lives of our pupils? This, surely, is our ideal. To this end, surely, must our work as teachers look. We can be satisfied with no lesser conception of our task.

Knowledge *about* the Bible and *about* Jesus and *about* God then is not enough. Such knowledge is religious only as it transforms life. We are con-

cerned, as teachers of religion, with knowledge only as it leads into the personal experience of God as Father, of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and the transformation of life's motives in accordance with the divine. "Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Commit to memory the aim of the Sunday school as stated for us by our leaders; but not before you have thought much over what it means:

To lead each pupil to a knowledge of God's will and an acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord, and to develop a Christian character that is expressed through worship, right living, and efficient service.

Knowledge.—To know God's will is no small task in this modern world of ours. The deeper our insight into the meaning of his word, the more intimate our acquaintance with the lives of those who have sought through the ages to do his will, the wider our knowledge of the world and its needs today, the better are we able to know God's will for us. Rightly related to the pupil's life, no knowledge that we can bring to him is irrelevant to this supreme aim of

knowing God's will. Not less knowledge, but more, as the result of our teaching in the Sunday school, is our need. But it must be knowledge that is more than knowledge because it helps our pupils to understand and to do God's will.

Decision for Christ.—"Acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord." Not an acceptance that occurs once and then is over and done with. Rather an acceptance that, through the life of fellowship and communion, is renewed daily, and becomes an ever richer and deeper and more powerful experience. The teacher will wish to plan carefully for definite decisions for Christ to be made and expressed. But he will wish such decisions to come as the culmination of a period of careful preparation, free from artificial or high-pressure methods. And he will wish them to be thought of as the beginning of an experience of growing devotion and loyalty rather than as an end in themselves.

Character.—And Christian character—character that grows—because the horizon of vision of God's purposes grows; because of the continual acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord of the life; because of daily fellowship with God through prayer; because of practice in Christian living and in service.

To this end will our programs of instruction and worship and service contribute.

Right Living.—Here, surely, is the test of character. Here is to be found the means and the end of our task. Upon this much emphasis has been laid in earlier chapters. Reread here the first paragraphs of the chapter on "Christian Living," the section on "Learning by Living" in the chapter on "Project Teaching," the earlier paragraphs in this chapter. The lives our pupils live measure our success or our failure as teachers in the Sunday school.

Worship.—The statement of the aim you have been asked to think over and to memorize contains one element to which, so far, we have been able to give only incidental attention. Yet *worship* is far from incidental in Christian experience and life. It is fundamental and vital—so much so that its importance is recognized by the provision of special texts and training courses devoted to it. This brief discussion of the teacher's task would, however, be incomplete without some consideration of the teacher's responsibility for the cultivation of the devotional life.

Our boys and girls may learn a great deal about God in the Sunday school and yet fail to come to

know Him. It is through worship that God becomes real. We need in our Sunday schools to plan carefully for training in worship. If we do not, our instruction and our service activities will fail to bring our pupils into the experience of God's reality and nearness. They will fail to enter into that sense of fellowship with him that is so central a part of real religious experience and without which knowledge lacks vitality and service lacks motive.

The teachers of Sunday school classes as well as the school and departmental officers should be interested in this question of worship and should concern themselves with the cultivation of the devotional life of the pupils, through the class itself and through the services of the school as a whole.

This is not the place to consider in any detail the methods of training in worship. As suggested, special provision is made in other texts for the study of this problem. In the suggestions for further reading and study these texts and other helpful books are mentioned. These books will provide suggestions as to songs and stories and the types of prayers best suited to different classes and departments; how children may be helped in their prayer life and in the de-

votional use of the Bible; how reverence and gratitude and love and faith may be cultivated.

Such attitudes cannot be cultivated apart from instruction and service. But without them knowledge is cold and dead and service is mere mechanics. The Christian knows God as a Father and as a Friend, real, personal, with whom he can talk. The Christian life finds its motives in love and reverence and gratitude toward the Father, in love and good-will toward his children, in faith in his goodness and his greatness. No one who knows little children can doubt that they can know God and talk to him, or that they love him and trust him and try to serve him. Too often we lose the sense of his reality and nearness as we grow older, and life loses the peace and the power that can come only through knowing him. The Sunday school must help to cultivate and enrich and deepen and establish this devotional life which so naturally and simply and unquestioningly manifests itself in the little child. If it is to do this it must give careful thought to its program of worship.

Only this additional word may be said. Training in worship means that the members of the Sunday school must really have a chance to worship. This

in turn means that there must be a part of the Sunday school program in which the provision of opportunity for genuine worship is the controlling aim. Reverence, gratitude, love, faith, trust, cannot be cultivated just by talking about them. One learns to worship through worshiping. One learns to pray by praying. And this does not mean listening to some one else pray. The constant consciousness of God in the life must be cultivated. "The practice of the presence of God" is the suggestive title of a book of a mediæval saint that has brought help to many.

The teacher who comes to have a sense of responsibility for the cultivation of the devotional life of his pupils will wish, in addition to coöperating in the worship service of the Sunday school, to help in the establishment of habits of daily private prayer and devotional Bible-reading. This will be relatively easy with children who come from sympathetic and religious homes. With those who do not the problem will be more difficult. The chief effort should be to create an appreciation of the value of the practice. Mechanical means will encourage mechanical observance. Where pledges are secured, reports made, and records kept as a basis for honor rolls and the like, such devices should be carefully subordinated to the

effort to cultivate the spirit of worship and devotion through this daily observance. Prayer and Bible-reading do not fall in the same category as the daily use of the tooth-brush. Brushing the teeth at a given time may well become a matter of mechanical habit; worship never can. So soon as it becomes mechanical it ceases to be worship. We are more interested in the spirit than in the routine of worship. A given time set apart for private devotion and held sacred for that purpose contributes greatly to the spiritual lives of many Christians; but when it does so contribute we may be sure that the observance of that hour is something more than mere habit. We seek to form the habit of daily devotion at a certain time not as an end in itself but as an aid to the cultivation of the spiritual life. It is the spirit always that counts and that should be most emphasized.

Growth.—Growth is the law of life, physical, mental, spiritual. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Our task is to guide the growth of the religious life of our pupils. Our programs of instruction, of training in worship, of training in living, all look toward the end of growth in Christian character—an end that can never be fully attained, for the glorious reason that the possibilities

of growth are never fully realized. The great apostle writes at the end of his life:

"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Growing to the end.

And this very purpose of growth suggests one thing more. It is Paul, again, who says "When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child." The religion of the little child can be very real. But it is not the religion of the youth. And in turn the spiritual experiences of youth must differ from those of maturity. That development of the religious life is most wholesome and most fruitful which is not forced. We must not present ideas that are beyond the pupil's comprehension. We must be careful not to force expression of experiences and attitudes beyond his capabilities. We must not impose forms of service into the motives for which the pupil cannot enter. To do so is to deprive the pupil of knowledge and experience vitally necessary to his life *now* and therefore vitally necessary to normal growth. It is, further, to run

the risk of making the religious life a matter of mechanical conformity rather than a vital experience. It is, often, to encourage insincerity and pretense, and thus to prepare the way for reactions that later may work havoc.

"Religion is more than a natural growth. It is a living, personal relation with God. It cannot be described in terms merely of 'laws' and 'periods of development. It depends upon God's own uncounted, resourceful ways, as in love and mercy He seeks to reach the minds and hearts and to enlist the wills of His children." And yet "growth in religion depends in part upon the growth of the human self as a whole. Even God must take His children as they are, if He is to help them become what they can be and ought to be. He must fit His help to their need, His teaching to their understanding."[1]

V. Summary

To meet the spiritual needs at each stage of development—that is the ideal. The study of the laws of the "growth of the human self" is an essential part of the teacher's preparation for his task if he rightly conceives it in terms of life and of development.

[1] Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers*, p. 93.

Let us sum up:

1. We cannot think of our task except in terms of the pupil himself.

2. We cannot think of our task except in terms of the *whole life* of the pupil.

3. So thinking of it we define the aim for our pupils in terms of Christian character and Christian living.

4. We think of Christian character and life as demanding:

   a. Knowledge of God's will as revealed in,
      (1) The Bible;
      (2) The story of Christianity in the world;
      (3) The needs of men.
   b. Fellowship with God through worship.
   c. Fellowship with God in life and service.

5. To the end of providing these essentials to Christian character and life we plan programs of

   a. Instruction;
   b. Training in worship;
   c. Training in living.

6. Recognizing the attainment of Christian character and life as a process of growth, continuous and never ending, we seek to conform our methods of guiding the process to the laws that govern it.

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What has been your purpose in studying this book?

2. What is your purpose as a Sunday school teacher? How has this purpose influenced your methods of teaching?

3. How would you define teaching? How would you define learning? Is teaching more than instruction? Explain.

4. Why is it true that the test of our teaching is found in the life of our pupil?

5. How would you define ideals? Illustrate.

6. How would you define motives? Illustrate.

7. What are some of the ideals you wish your pupils to have as a result of your teaching?

8. What are some Christian motives?

9. State again (as in Chapter 8) the relation between character and living.

10. Are the pupils in your Sunday school really learning to worship? To pray? How might the Sunday school help them more in this respect?

11. Why should the Sunday school seek to cultivate the devotional life?

12. How can the teacher best help pupils to cultivate habits of daily prayer and Bible study?

13. How may Christian motives be established? By instruction alone? By training in worship? What else is needed?

14. Can you give illustration of the fact that the religious experience of children differs from that of older people?

15. Can you point to definite changes that are taking

place in the lives of your pupils as the result of your teaching?

16. Have you observed or experienced the harmful effects of "forcing" religious professions from children?

17. What are the chief spiritual needs of the members of your class? Be as definite as possible. Is the Sunday school helping to meet them?

CHAPTER XII

THE PREPARATION OF THE TEACHER

I. Shrinking from the Task

The teacher with a vision of his task such as we have tried to suggest in the preceding chapter will almost surely find himself seriously questioning his own fitness. As one pictures to himself his ideal teacher and measures himself by such an ideal he is apt to find himself overwhelmed by the sense of his own inadequacy. "I cannot teach. I am not good enough. I do not know enough. I am not skilled enough." Have you ever been tempted to offer such excuses as this for refusal to undertake responsibility for a share in the work of the Sunday school?

But we can ill afford to make excuses. The work must be done if the kingdom is to come in the hearts of children and youth and through them in the world. Ours is a part of the responsibility. Busy as we are, conscious as we are of our shortcomings, should we rather not courageously face our task and our respon-

sibility, and ask ourselves how we may best fit ourselves to meet the challenge?

II. The Function of Ideals

Our thinking must be in terms of ideals. We should never be content with less than the ideal. There is a "divine discontent." But such discontent is not the kind that makes for shirking. The ideal should inspire, not depress. It should be a guide to our efforts, a help in finding the causes of our failures, a constant incentive and aid to improvement as we go on with our work.

Our shortcomings are many. Many things work against us. But that is all the more reason why we should strive to make our work more and more nearly in accord with the ideals we set for ourselves. And when we fail, the true teachers among us will rally from the temporary discouragement with new determination, with new zeal, with a new lesson from experience.

Setting ideals for ourselves does mean taking our work as Sunday school teachers seriously. It makes forever impossible carelessness and indifference in our attitude and hit-or-miss, lackadaisical methods of procedure. We will feel the need for preparation

for our task. We will be ready and eager to seize every opportunity better to fit ourselves for our part in the work of the Sunday school.

III. The Opportunity for Training

And the opportunity is offered, increasingly, to all. As the Church's great program of leadership-training is extended there is less and less excuse for any teacher's failure to avail himself of the help that it offers. In the reading and study of this book you have made, perhaps, a beginning. It should be just a beginning. This book has failed of its purpose if it has not aroused in the reader the desire to go further, to know more, to master more thoroughly the principles of good teaching, to profit more largely by the experience of those whom the Church has appointed to lead in the great enterprise of religious education. Do not lay this book aside, do not feel that this course has been completed, until you have informed yourself as to the next step—and the next. The help is yours for the asking.[1]

[1] Write to the Office of Training Work, General Sunday School Board, M. E. Church, South, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. Ask for full information about the Leadership Training Courses.

IV. Finding Time

We do not have the time. Are we sure? Not so much time as we should like, perhaps; not time for all we should like to do. But that is no excuse for doing nothing. And possibly, if our interest is great enough and we try hard enough, we can find time for more than we think. Is there no time wasted in your day?

V. The Ideal of Growth

What we need, as teachers, most of all, perhaps, is to hold for ourselves the ideal of growth. With all sincerity any teacher, however experienced, can say, "I count not myself yet to have attained." But we must not stop there. Let us without fail add: "Forgetting the things which are behind, . . . I press toward the goal."

In Religious Experience.—Paul in the words just quoted was speaking of his own religious life and experience. And it is here that the Sunday school teacher must first apply them.

The Sunday school teacher must be a Christian. That hardly needs to be said. The teacher cannot

teach what he does not know. He cannot impart to others what he does not have. He cannot lead others where he himself has not been.

But what does being a Christian mean to us? Does it mean growth in Christian experience, in the sense of fellowship with God, in the meaning of Christian living, in the power to live triumphantly? Are we pressing forward in our Christian lives?

Vitality means growth, in the spiritual as well as in the physical world. The cultivation of his own spiritual life is the first concern of the teacher who would guide the development of the spiritual lives of others. "Above all, he who would build a personality fitted to serve as the teacher of the child in his religion must constantly live in the presence of *the best he can attain in God.* There is no substitute for this. No fullness of intellectual power and grasp, no richness of knowledge gleaned, and no degree of skill in instruction can take the place of a vibrant, immediate, Spirit-filled consciousness of God in the heart. For religion is *life,* and the best definition of religion we can present to the child is the example and warmth of a life inspired and vivified by contact with the Source of all spiritual being."[2]

[2] Betts, *How to Teach Religion* (Abingdon Press), p. 18.

There recently appeared in one of the religious journals the spiritual autobiography of a great religious leader of today. "The log of a spiritual voyager" the editors called it; a voyager "ever launching out into new seas, ever lifting the sails of his soul to new winds, ever keeping the prow turned toward the new kingdom still to be discovered." "The Christian message came to me more than forty years ago as a personal gospel. I saw Christ as a personal Savior, I felt a sense of my own sin in personal conviction, I apprehended the good news of forgiveness as a personal possessive salvation." So the record runs. But that was just the beginning. "I do not count myself yet to have apprehended," writes the author at the end. "I have seen this great and growing good news as a personal gospel, as a missionary gospel, as a satisfying gospel, as a social gospel, as a gospel of peace, equal to the need of a warring world, to bring peace upon earth and goodwill to men." And yet, "I do not count myself yet to have apprehended. Forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forward to the things that are before, I desire to apprehend."[3]

[3] "What Is the Gospel?" by Sherwood Eddy in the *Christian Century* for December 25, 1924.

Are you a spiritual voyager? Or has your spiritual bark gone permanently into dry dock?

But a vital religious experience is not enough. Fundamental as it is, and indispensable, it cannot be substituted for adequate knowledge and skill in teaching. Consecration, if it is genuine and complete, will prove the inspiration to the teacher in the proper furnishing of himself for his special task.

In Knowledge.—To this end, then, the earnest teacher will be continually a student. He will need as broad a background of knowledge as he is able to secure. He will not be content with the mechanical use of "lesson helps." To his teaching he will wish to bring such resources as he can command in the way of general preparation. He will be first of all a student of the Bible. He will seek to know it in more than verbal fashion. He will wish to know how it came to us. He will wish to know it in relationship to the life and history of the people to whom it first came. He will wish to understand the messages that it brought to the minds and hearts of those who first received them. He will wish to know the hearts and minds and lives of the inspired writers. He will, thus, wish to call to his aid the students and scholars who have given their lives to the study

of the Bible and who can help his own understanding of the book and its message. Above all, he will wish to study it continually in relationship to his own life and to the needs of the growing lives of his pupils.

He will wish to know, too, the story of the meaning of the Bible and its message down through the centuries; the story of Christianity in the world, the triumphs of the faith, and the heroism of those who have given themselves to its spread.

And beyond this: much. The history and organization and enterprises of his own Church, connectional and local; the world today and the problems with which it challenges the Church and the Christian religion itself; the great formulations of faith in the creeds, and their meaning; religious literature outside the Bible; religious music, religious art and architecture—an ever-broadening field opens out before the teacher who seeks the knowledge that will make his own religion more intelligent, his ideas clearer, his insights and appreciations deeper, so that he may be more richly furnished for his teaching. But it is not how much we already know; rather, "Are we constantly seeking to know more?"

In Teaching Skill.—But knowledge alone can no more suffice than can consecration alone or even the two together. To these must be added skill in teaching. Reread here all that was said about the meaning of teaching in our preceding chapter. The good teacher will be a trained teacher. And that will mean two things: profiting by the experience of others and profiting by one's own experience. That is teacher-training at its best: study—to get help from others; and practice—to get help from one's successes and failures.

The books on teaching to which you have been introduced in this course grow out of experience; they offer many practical suggestions as to details of procedure; and they seek to formulate principles that should govern the teacher's own practice. Rightly used, they are invaluable. Is it too much to expect that every Sunday school teacher should include in his reading every year at least one book on teaching methods?

In a sense, of course, it is misleading to call such books "teacher-training" books. No teacher ever becomes a trained teacher except through practice. We learn to teach by teaching. Our now familiar principle of learning by doing holds here as else-

where. Reading and studying any number of books about teaching will not make a successful teacher. But the books can help. What they can and should do is to furnish guiding principles, suggestions to be tried out in actual practice, standards and tests that will help the teacher to evaluate his work and discover its strength and its weaknesses.

In Insight into Child Life.—Along with and as a part of the study of teaching methods will go the study of child-nature. Recall what was said of the growth of religion in the preceding chapter. Recall the emphasis that has been laid all through our discussion upon the importance of fitting the instruction, the worship, the service, to the capacities, the interests, the needs, of the pupil. Only through knowing something of the needs and interests and abilities at each stage of development can the teacher hope to minister to and nurture the unfolding life.

Here, too, the books can help. Courses in "pupil-study" are rightly included in all our training programs. But here, too, nothing can take the place of first-hand experience. No description in a book of the "typical ten-year-old boy" ever fits the particular problem you are wrestling with in the form of Billy Johnson or Tom Green. The books on child-nature

can help you to know what to look for and how to understand and deal with what you find; how Billy Johnson is like and how he is different from other boys and girls of his years; what the abilities and what the limitations, in general, of particular age groups are. But beyond this the successful teacher must know his own particular group, as individuals, unique, in some ways exceptions to all rules, with a make-up and a background of experience unlike that which any other individual ever has had or ever will have. To understand his pupils is a prime requisite of the successful teacher. To this understanding all that he can know of the life of the pupils at home, in the schoolroom, on the streets, on the playground, will contribute. To everything that is affecting the life of the pupil the teaching in the Sunday school must in some way be related. Only so can it "tie up" as a vital influence in that life.

In Personality.—What more? We hear much of the "personality" of the Teacher as an important factor in teaching. We know that often the teacher who has a fine physique, beauty of face, charm of manner, may win easy access to the heart and life of boy or girl where the teacher of equal earnestness and sincerity but with lesser natural endowment finds

entrance difficult. We realize that we have to be content with the physical limitations that are our heritage. Graces of manner seldom become spontaneous and natural if put on after mature life has been entered upon. There are temperamental handicaps of one sort or another under which most of us must labor. And so, perhaps, we may find this emphasis upon the importance of personality at times discouraging.

We cannot deny that the traits we have mentioned are assets. But we need not overestimate their importance. There is always the danger that they will be thought of as satisfactory substitutes for more essential qualities of character and preparation in the teacher. That they can never be. They are at most desirable supplements. Then sometimes we find a teacher of great personal charm who is, perhaps all unconsciously, tying the affections and the loyalties of a class to himself personally rather than to the class, the school, the Church, the cause. This is making personality a barrier rather than an avenue. The personality of the teacher must never be the first object of the loyalty and devotion of a class.

We need, too, to remember that personality means very much more, after all, than mere superficial at-

tractiveness. There are qualities of personality and of character that *can* be cultivated and that in the end count for vastly more in the teacher's work than the surface graces unsupported by more solid traits. And it is of these more vital elements of personality that we should think most when we think of the power of personality.

The teacher must therefore, in all sincerity, forget whatever personal limitations he may feel and simply strive always to be *at his best*. There are little things that he will need to watch. Little mannerisms, oddities of speech or dress, may sometimes so distract the pupil's attention as to interfere seriously with the teacher's message. The teacher will need to guard against allowing anything about himself to stand between the pupil and the lesson.

But there is much more that the teacher may do than this guarding against these trivial distractions. He may, for example, not be the athlete he feels he should be if he is to hold his boys. But he can keep physically fit. And physical fitness is obligatory upon every teacher. Nerves unstrung through worry, fatigue from over-long hours at work or at play, lack of condition due to lazy neglect of needed exercise—these may lead to a flash of irritability that will

spoil this lesson and any others that the teacher tries to teach. The teacher must strive to be *physically* at his best if he is to be alert mentally, sensitive spiritually to the needs of his pupils.

Sincerity and genuine interest must come high on any list of qualities requisite for success in teaching. The mask of pretense is very easily seen through by keen-eyed boys and girls. To profess enthusiasms which one does not possess will very soon undermine the pupil's faith in anything the teacher says. The interest, too, must be more than an interest in the work in general and in the abstract. It must be a personal interest in the boys and girls themselves—in all that interests them and affects their lives. Absent-minded absorption or careless indifference that makes the teacher fail to see and greet his pupil on the street may erect a permanent barrier to that pupil's heart.

And equally is it true that a spontaneous flash of friendly interest may insolubly bind a shy pupil to the teacher. A casual meeting and the interchange of a few words of comradely talk may count for more than hours in the class-room. Courage or loyalty or high honor, revealed in some seemingly commonplace act of everyday life; some sincere but unpre-

meditated response of reverence or deep feeling in the presence of the high and the holy—these may make an impression upon the youthful mind and heart that will be far more permanent than that of any spoken word.

One could make an almost endless list of traits with which to endow the ideal teacher: cheerfulness, a sense of humor, patience, self-control, poise, tolerance, sympathy, responsiveness, humility, ability to coöperate. Most of us are very ordinary folks, possessing more or less of the good traits and, along with them, more or less of their opposites. But let us not deceive ourselves; these desirable traits can be cultivated—not always easily, not always to the extent of our aspiration, but always sufficiently to rob us of the right to make excuse because we do not possess them.

Of this we may be sure: if we leave them as vague names of characteristics which, with equal vagueness, we wish we might possess in greater measure, little progress will be made toward their attainment. Far more profitable is it to ask of one's self questions as direct and as specific as possible. Where did I fail in the teaching of this lesson? Just what did I do or say, just what did I leave unsaid or un-

done, that might better have been otherwise? Why am I failing to get hold of Tom, or Jane? What do I do that repels? What may I do or say that will let them know of my interest and love? Do I go to my class in the best of physical condition—or tired and "edgy" from a week of strain or unwise use of time and energy? Am I keeping fit? Does my everyday living make for health and normality and vigor of body and mind? Am I seeking the true, the beautiful, and the good in my hours of leisure? Am I giving myself a real chance to grow, mentally and spiritually? How would a review of my activities this week, this day, answer these questions?

Perhaps, as teachers, we need to think little about our "personalities" as such. We may see clearly that it is personality, after all, that leaves permanent impress on the personalities of others. But our personalities are developed, not by attempts to "rate" ourselves on a scale by the presence or absence of traits vaguely named nor by morbid self-analysis. Rather should we occasionally subject to searching scrutiny what we actually do when we fail or when we succeed; thus will be revealed to us points of weakness and of strength, and, as well, the clues to the way in which we may set about to improve.

Life at its best—no less—must be the ideal of the teacher. It is at the teacher's life, first of all, that the pupil will look. And the teacher who is striving for life at its best will more and more embody those traits which he would wish to develop in his pupils, even though he would not ascribe to himself any great measure of "personality." Let us look to the things we do, the thoughts we think, the environment in which we live—physical, mental, spiritual; and our personalities will take care of themselves.

VI. Is It Worth the Cost?

Growth in religious experience; growth in knowledge; growth in understanding of the lives we seek to guide; growth in teaching skill; growth of personality: to this end, with all the limitations of time and opportunity that have to be overcome, will the teacher work. A task that demands much! Is it worth what it costs?

"The greatest of all events, at any time, is when some young, growing person conceives a high purpose and accepts a splendid devotion. All that armies, navies, parliaments and finance can do is as nothing to that. He who forms the purposes of childhood fashions the future world. To get just

our little group of youth to see the city of God and give themselves to its realization is not only to be in the main stream but it is to determine its direction. . . .

"Silently and mightily in the wills, purposes and ideals of people is the force of the stream gathered up and its direction determined. It moves on somewhither. Whoso guides those wills, forms those purposes and clarifies those ideals, whoso can set them to making a better world, whoso can guide them to the religious way of life, he—no matter how obscurely he works—he guides the stream; he makes the world. For the great business of life lies not in what people make but in making people." [4]

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the value of an ideal?
2. What is your chief need as a teacher? How are you setting about meeting that need?
3. Did any Sunday school teacher influence your life in childhood? If so try to decide why and how.
4. Write a brief description of "The Ideal Sunday School Teacher."
5. Are there "born teachers"? Explain your answer.

[4] From an editorial, "Back Eddy and Main Stream," in *Religious Education,* August, 1921.

6. Can you read one book a year on teaching methods? Or more? Will you?

7. State carefully, in your own words, why the teacher needs to know child-life.

8. Write out a list of "Things a Sunday School Teacher Should Know."

9. What will be your next step in preparation for your task?

10. Is it worth the cost? Answer for yourself alone.

APPENDIX

Suggestions for Further Reading and Study

The books mentioned in these suggestions are in the main such as should be readily available in a good public library, in any college library, or in any collection of books for teachers.

Chapters I and II

These chapters are intended to suggest, in connection with very practical questions, some of the principles that should govern all our thinking about the teaching process. In connection with these two chapters the student who wishes to go more thoroughly into the whole basic question of interest and motivation will do well to read:

Dewey, *Interest and Effort in Education.*

The following references are to well known books written mainly for public school teachers; any of them will be helpful to the Sunday school teacher as well:

Bagley, *Class-Room Management,* Chapters IX, X, XI, XII.

Colvin, *The Learning Process,* Chapters XVII, XVIII, XIX.

Earhart, *Teaching Children to Study.*

Holley, *The Teacher's Technique,* Chapter XIII.

James, *Talks to Teachers,* Chapters X and XI.

McMurry, *How to Study and Teaching How to Study.*

Minor, *Principles of Teaching Practically Applied,* Chapters IV and V.

Strayer and Norsworthy, *How to Teach,* Chapters III and XIV.

Stromzand, *Progressive Methods of Teaching,* Chapter IV.

Wilson and Wilson, *The Motivation of School Work.*

Especially for Sunday school teachers are the following:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapters VIII and IX.

Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* Chapters IX and X, and pages 79-80, 82.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Methods in Teaching Religion,* Chapters V, VI, VII and VIII.

Galloway, *The Use of Motives in Teaching Morals and Religion.*

Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching,* Chapters III, IV, XIII.

Weigle, *The Teacher,* Chapter V.

Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers,* Chapters XVI, XVIII.

Chapters III, IV, V, VI, and IX

On the technique of class instruction and of lesson planning Group 1 below includes the titles of books dealing with methods in general education; the Sunday school teacher will be greatly profited by the reading of one or more of them. Group 2 includes books on teaching methods in religious education; the discussion in this text should be supplemented by the reading of as many of the chapters indicated as possible.

GROUP 1

Bagley, *Class-Room Management,* Chapter XIII.

Bagley, *The Educative Process,* Chapters XIX-XXIII.

Betts, *Class-Room Method and Management,* Chapter IX.

Betts, *The Recitation.*

Earhart, *Types of Teaching.*

Holley, *The Teacher's Technique.*

Minor, *Principles of Teaching Practically Applied,* Chapters I, II, III, XI, XII, XIII.

Strayer, *Brief Course in the Teaching Process,* Chapters X, XI, XVI.

Strayer and Norsworthy, *How to Teach,* Chapter XIII.

Stromzand, *Progressive Methods of Teaching,* Chapters I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII.

GROUP 2

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapters II, III, IV.

Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* Chapters X, XI, XII, and pages 141-147.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapters IX, XI, XIII, XVI.

Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching,* Chapters XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XX.

Weigle, *The Teacher,* Chapters III, VIII.

Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers,* Chapters XV, XIX, XX, XXI, XXIV.

Chapter III

Special books on story-telling are the following. In addition to discussing the technique of story-telling these books will suggest many stories suitable for use in religious education and will tell where these stories may be found:

Bryant, *How to Tell Stories to Children.*

Cather, *Educating by Story Telling.*

Cather, *Religious Education Through Story Telling.*

Eggleston, *The Use of the Story in Religious Education.*

Houghton, *Telling Bible Stories.*

St. John, *Stories and Story Telling.*

Chapter VII

The following deal specifically with topics discussed in the chapter on dramatization and hand work:

Bailey, *The Use of Arts in Religious Education.*
Ferris, *Following the Dramatic Instinct.*
Littlefield, *Handwork in the Sunday School.*
Miller, *The Dramatization of Bible Stories.*
Lobingier, *Dramatization in the Church School.*
Meredith, *Pageantry and Dramatics in Religious Education.*
Wardle, *Handwork in Religious Education.*

Chapter VIII

Discussion of the guiding principles for training in Christian living and abundant practical suggestions will be found in:

Beard, *Graded Missionary Education in the Church School.*
Cope, *Principles of Christian Service.*
Diffendorfer, *Missionary Education in Home and School.*
Hoben, *The Church School of Citizenship.*
Hutchins, *Graded Social Service in the Sunday School.*
Gates, *Recreation and the Church.*
Lobingier, *World Friendship Through the Church School.*

The following chapters will also helpfully supplement the discussions in Chapters VII and VIII of this book:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapters XI and XII.

Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* Chapter VI.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapters XIV, XV, XVII.

Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching,* Chapters XVIII and XIX.

Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers,* Chapters XVII, XX, XXIII, XXIV.

Chapter X

On the project method the following will be helpful:

Adams, *Modern Developments in Educational Practice,* Chapter X.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapter XII.

Bonser, *The Elementary School Curriculum.*

Branom, *The Project Method in Education.*

Coe, *Law and Freedom in the School.*

Hosic and Chase, *Brief Guide to the Project Method.*

Kilpatrick, *The Project Method.*

Kilpatrick, *Foundations of Method.*

McMurry, *Teaching by Projects.*

Minor, *Principles of Teaching Practically Applied.*
Stevenson, *The Project Method of Teaching.*
Stockton, *Project Work in Education.*
Stromzand, *Progressive Methods of Teaching,* Chapter V.

Most of the above discuss the project method in general education. Two books have been published dealing with the project method in religious education:

Crum, *The Project Method in Religious Education.*
Shaver, *The Project Principle in Religious Education.*

The first of these has a brief introductory chapter on the meaning of projects; the remainder of the book describes some experiments in the use of the method in a college department of religion. The second of these two books is a thorough-going discussion of the theory and practice of project teaching in the Church school, with detailed descriptions of actual project work in typical situations. It is the best book on the subject for the Sunday school teacher.

Chapter XI

On the aims of religious education helpful supplementary chapters will be:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapter II.
Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* Chapters II, III, IV, V.
Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapters I, II, III, IV.
Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching,* Chapters I, II, XXIV.
Stout, *The Organization and Administration of Religious Education,* Chapters I, II, III.
Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers,* Chapter XII.
Weigle, *The Teacher,* Chapter I.

And for still further reading:

Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education.*
Chappell, *Evangelism in the Sunday School.*

On the cultivation of the devotional life the teacher should, if possible, read both of the following:

Kennedy and Meyer, *The Training of the Devotional Life.*
Weigle and Tweedy, *Training the Devotional Life.*

Teachers of Juniors will find invaluable:

Jones, *Training Juniors in Worship.*

Additional references on this topic are:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapter X.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapter XVIII.

Hartshorne, *Worship in the Sunday School.*

Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching,* Chapters XXI, XXII.

Weigle, *The Training of Children in the Christian Family,* Chapter XII.

Chapter XII

On the teacher himself, his personality and his preparation, two small books, not written primarily for Sunday school teachers, will nevertheless prove for them delightful and stimulating reading. They are:

Palmer, *The Ideal Teacher.*

Hyde, *The Teacher's Philosophy.*

The qualifications of the public school teacher are discussed in a way that will prove helpful also to the Sunday school teacher in

Bagley and Keith, *An Introduction to Teaching,* Chapter XI.

The Sunday school teacher is discussed in:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching,* Chapter I.

Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* Chapter I.

Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion,* Chapter X.

Slattery, *Living Teachers.*
Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers,* Chapters XIII and XIV.
Weigle, *The Teacher,* Chapter I.

Books on Psychology

Some teachers who study this text may feel the need of greater familiarity with the terms and principles of general psychology. As simple, clearly written introductions any one of the following can be recommended:

Adams, *The Ways of the Mind.*
Betts, *The Mind and Its Education.*
Bennett, *Psychology and Self-Development.*
Cameron, *Psychology and the School.*
Colvin and Bagley, *Human Behavior.*
Peters, *Human Conduct.*

Somewhat more technical, but at the same time interesting and readable, and not at all forbiddingly academic are the following:

Averill, *Psychology for Normal Schools.*
Averill, *Elements of Educational Psychology.*
Bolton, *Every-Day Psychology for Teachers.*
Gates, *Elementary Psychology.*
Gates, *Psychology for Students of Education.*
Woodworth, *Psychology, A Study of Mental Life.*

Ten Books Especially Recommended for the Sunday School Teacher's Library

These books are all referred to in the suggestions given above. It is believed that they will be most generally useful in supplementing the study of this text:

Dewey, *Interest and Effort in Education.*
Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education.*
Betts, *The Recitation.*
Strayer and Norsworthy, *How to Teach.*
Cather, *Religious Education Through Story Telling.*
Palmer, *The Ideal Teacher.*
Shaver, *The Project Principle in Religious Education.*

One of:

Kennedy and Meyer, *The Training of the Devotional Life.*
Weigle and Tweedy, *Training the Devotional Life.*

Any two of:

Barclay, *Principles of Religious Teaching.*
Betts, *How to Teach Religion.*
Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion.*
Sheridan and White, *Learning and Teaching.*
Weigle, *Talks to Sunday School Teachers.*
Weigle, *The Teacher.*

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